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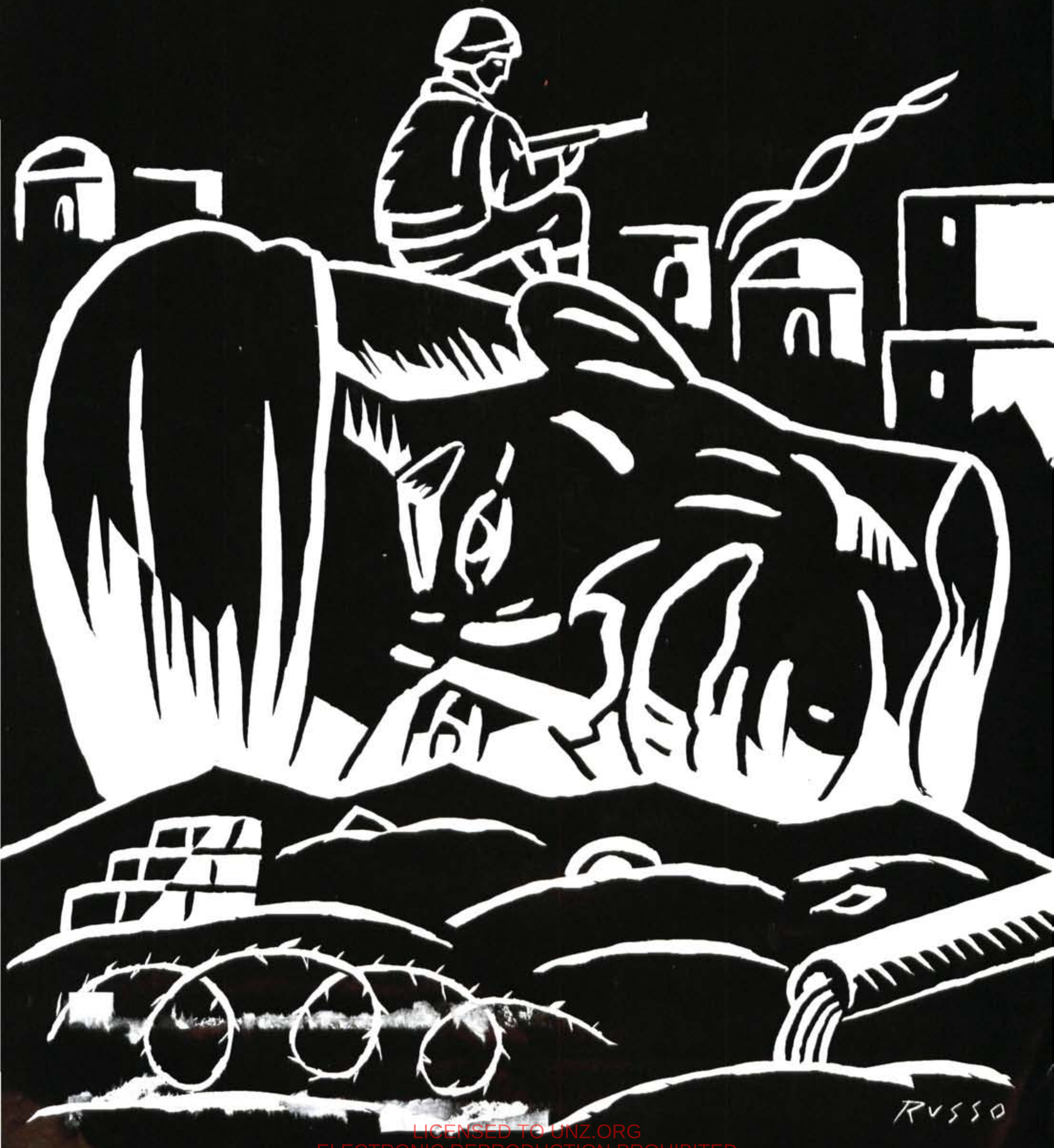
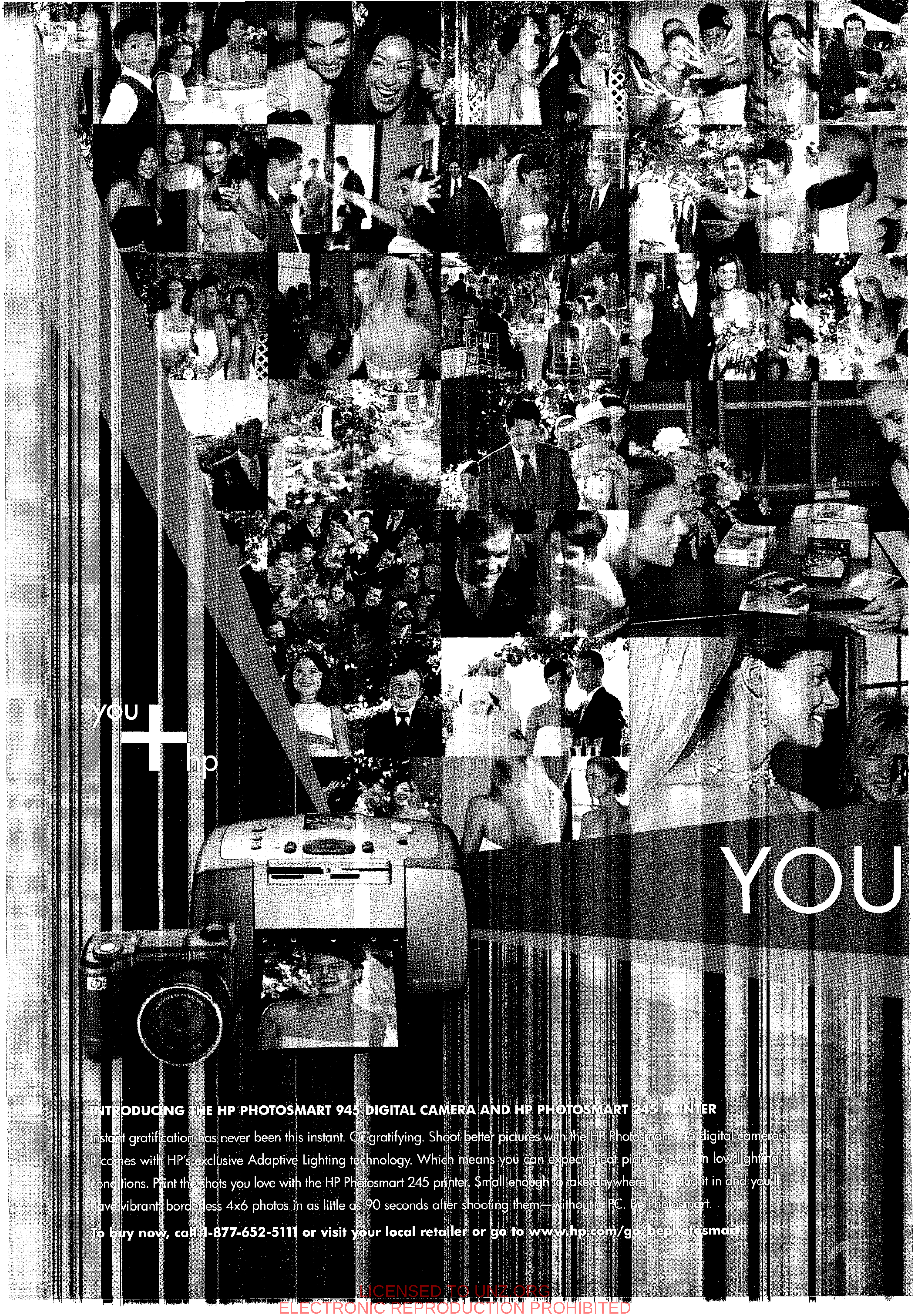
NOV. 24, 2003





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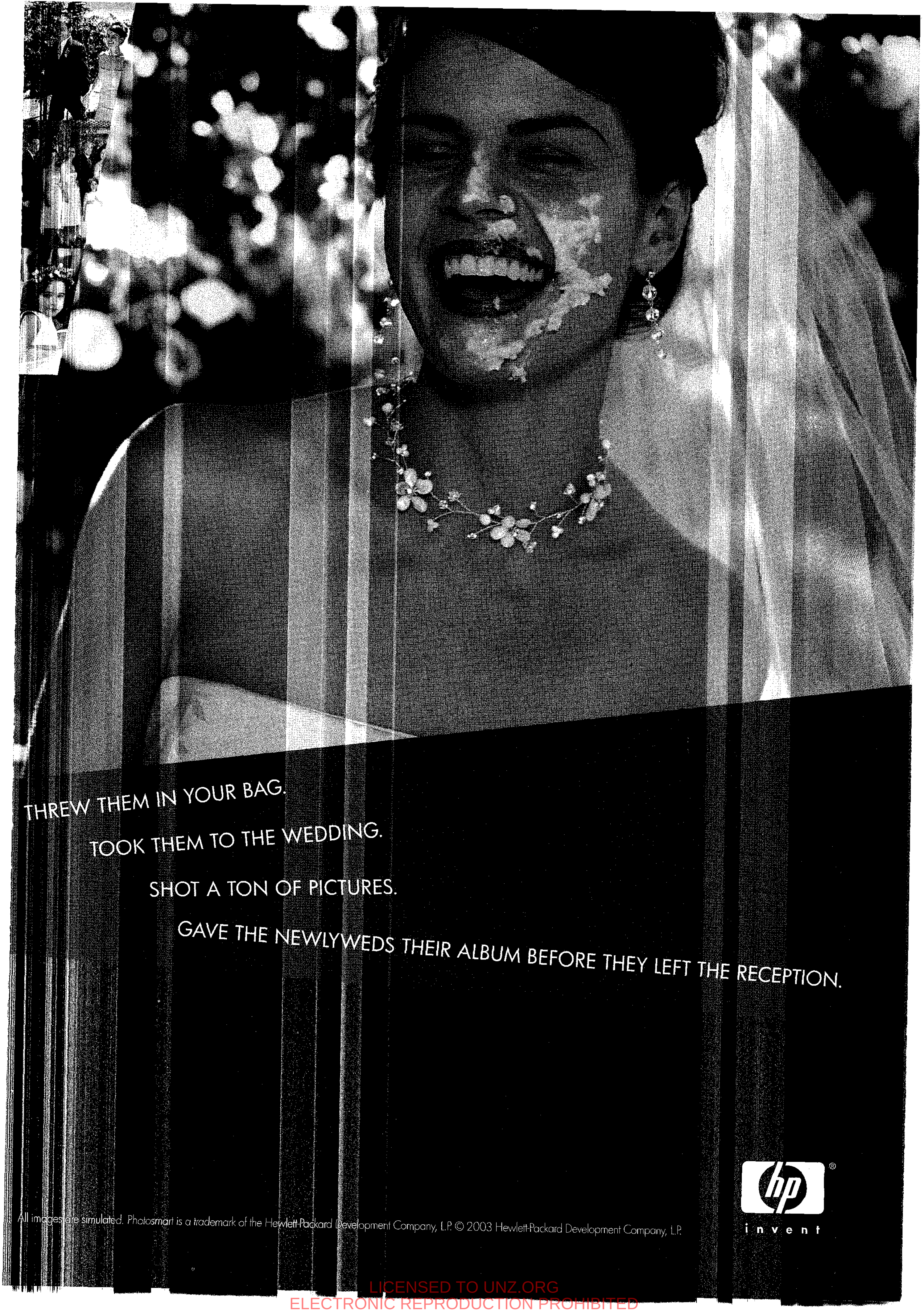
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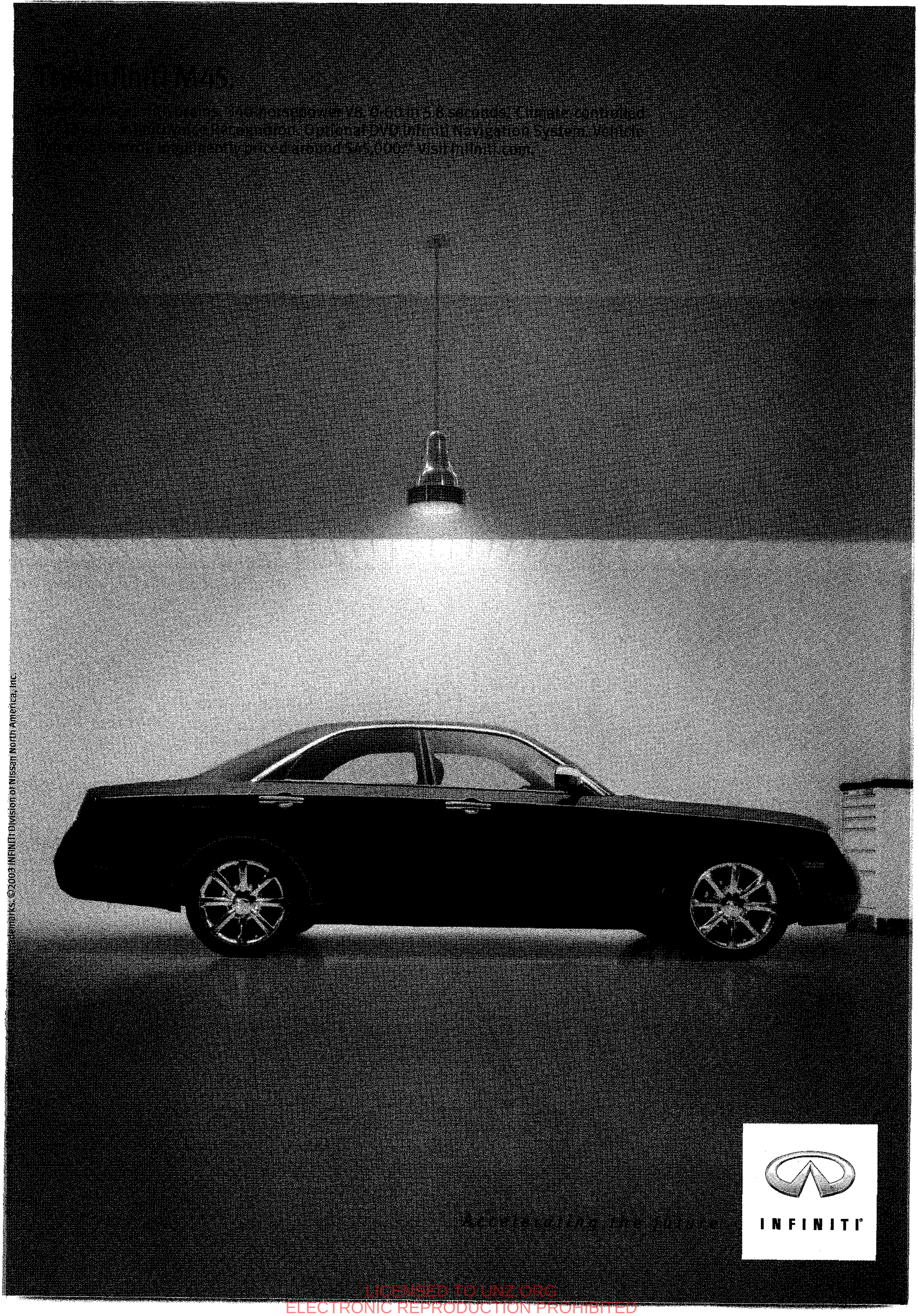

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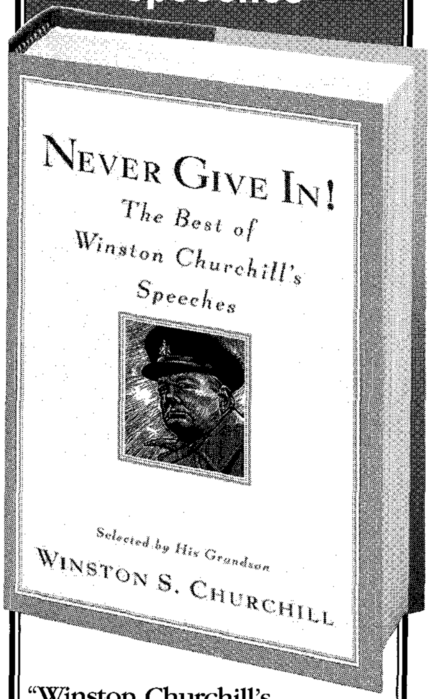

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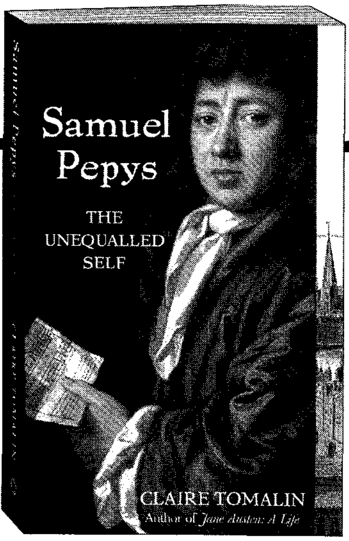

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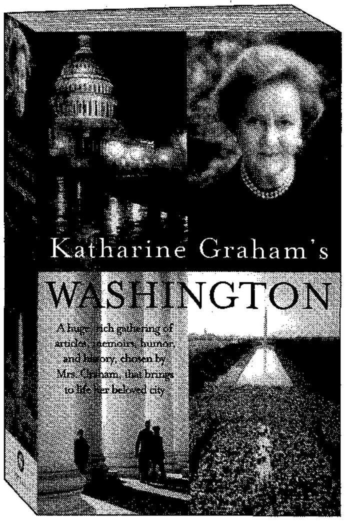
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CONTRIBUTORS

George Packer ("War After the War," p. 58) is the author of "The Village of Waiting," and the editor of a book of essays, "The Fight Is for Democracy: Winning the War of Ideas in America and the World," which was published in August.

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Anthony Russo (Cover) is an illustrator. This is his first cover for the magazine.

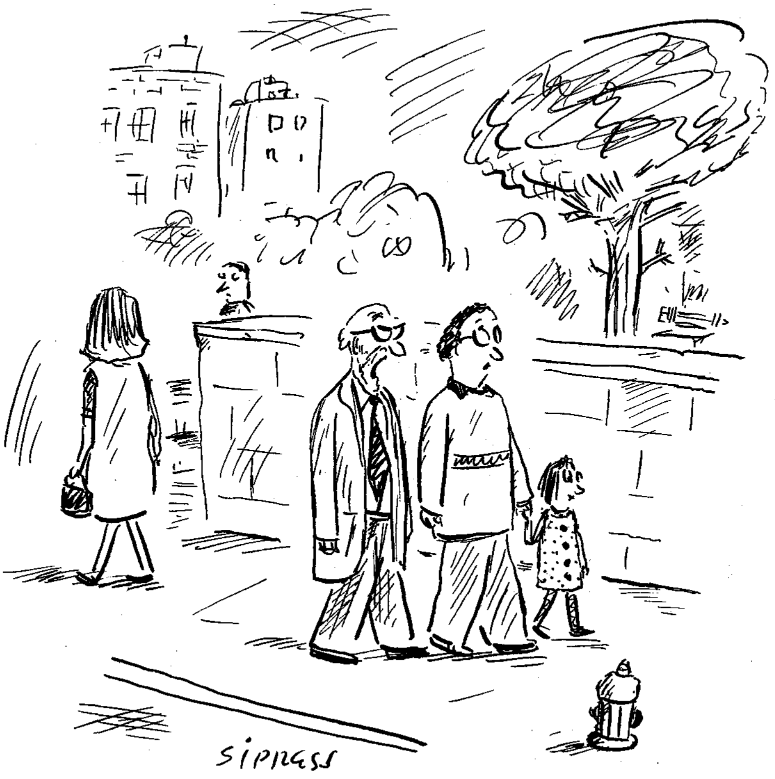
Roger Angell ("Gone South," p. 44) is a fiction editor at the magazine. His books include "A Pitcher's Story: Innings with David Cone" and "Game Time: A Baseball Companion."

Julian Barnes (Fiction, p. 86), whose translation of Alphonse Daudet's "In the Land of Pain" appeared earlier this year, will publish a collection of short stories, "The Lemon Table," in July, 2004.

Jeffrey Frank (The Talk of the Town, p. 42) is a senior editor at the magazine. "The Stories of Hans Christian Andersen," which he edited and translated with Diana Crone Frank, is out this week.

Hilton Als (The Theatre, p. 94) edited, with Darryl Turner, "White Noise: The Eminem Collection," a book of essays that came out this month.

Anthony Lane (A Critic at Large, p. 97) is the author of "Nobody's Perfect: Writings from *The New Yorker*," which is now available in paperback. ♦



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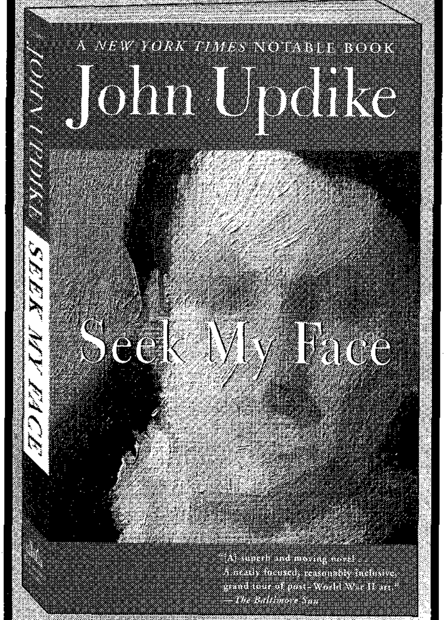

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NAOMI WOLF'S ADVICE

I am sorry that Larissa MacFarquhar, in her Talk of the Town piece on Midge Decter, the author of a book on Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld, chose to repeat a politically inspired urban legend about my alleged role in the last Presidential campaign (November 3rd). For the record, in the Gore 2000 campaign I was one of many women who advised on outreach to women and on issues of concern to women, such as pay equity, domestic violence, job discrimination, family leave, and flextime. The famously distorted "alpha male" phrase came from a memo I wrote that compared the role of *any* President, which is to advance his own agenda, with that of *any* Vice-President, which is to support the Administration's agenda. The phrase used the kind of journalistic shorthand with which my readers are familiar, but it was making a fairly banal political point about role division in any Administration, and had nothing to do with Al Gore personally. The above may be less intriguing than the media's imagined masculinity lessons; but it has the benefit of being true.
Naomi Wolf
New York City

WHAT THE POPE WANTS

Jane Kramer argues that Pope John Paul II, subsequent to the fall of Communism in Poland, "has been blindsided by his own life" (The Talk of the Town, November 3rd). She suggests that there is a disjunction between what she rightfully counts among his achievements—his service as "the voice of the fall of Communism" and as "the voice of reconciliation between the Roman Catholic Church and two millennia of excoriated Jews"—and initiatives undertaken in the Pope's latter years. These she regards as the result of illness, "obsessions," and "reactionary keepers." Kramer might have given more attention to alternative views, including the Pope's stated commitment to guarding the dignity of the human person, which may provide a unifying context to many of the judgments and decisions that, to her, seem so opposed.
Beth Beshear
Newton, Mass.

Kramer writes that Catholic nuns are "forbidden to administer the Eucharist." This is not so. Nuns—along with any layperson—can "administer" the Eucharist. It happens all the time at Mass. (Nuns can also, like any Catholic, in a state of emergency such as imminent death, perform the sacrament of baptism.) What Kramer meant to say, clearly, was that nuns, being female and thus barred from the priesthood, are not the ones who *consecrate* the Eucharist.
Sam Kean
Sioux Falls, S.D.

CORRECTION: In "Ghosts in the House" (October 27th), Hilton Als writes that Toni Morrison's 1987 novel "Beloved" was not nominated for a National Book Award, and that Pete Dexter's "Paris Trout" won that year. "Beloved" was nominated in 1987, and lost to Larry Heinemann's "Paco's Story." "Paris Trout" was nominated and won in 1988.

ANSWERS TO LAST WEEK'S CARTOON CROSSWORD

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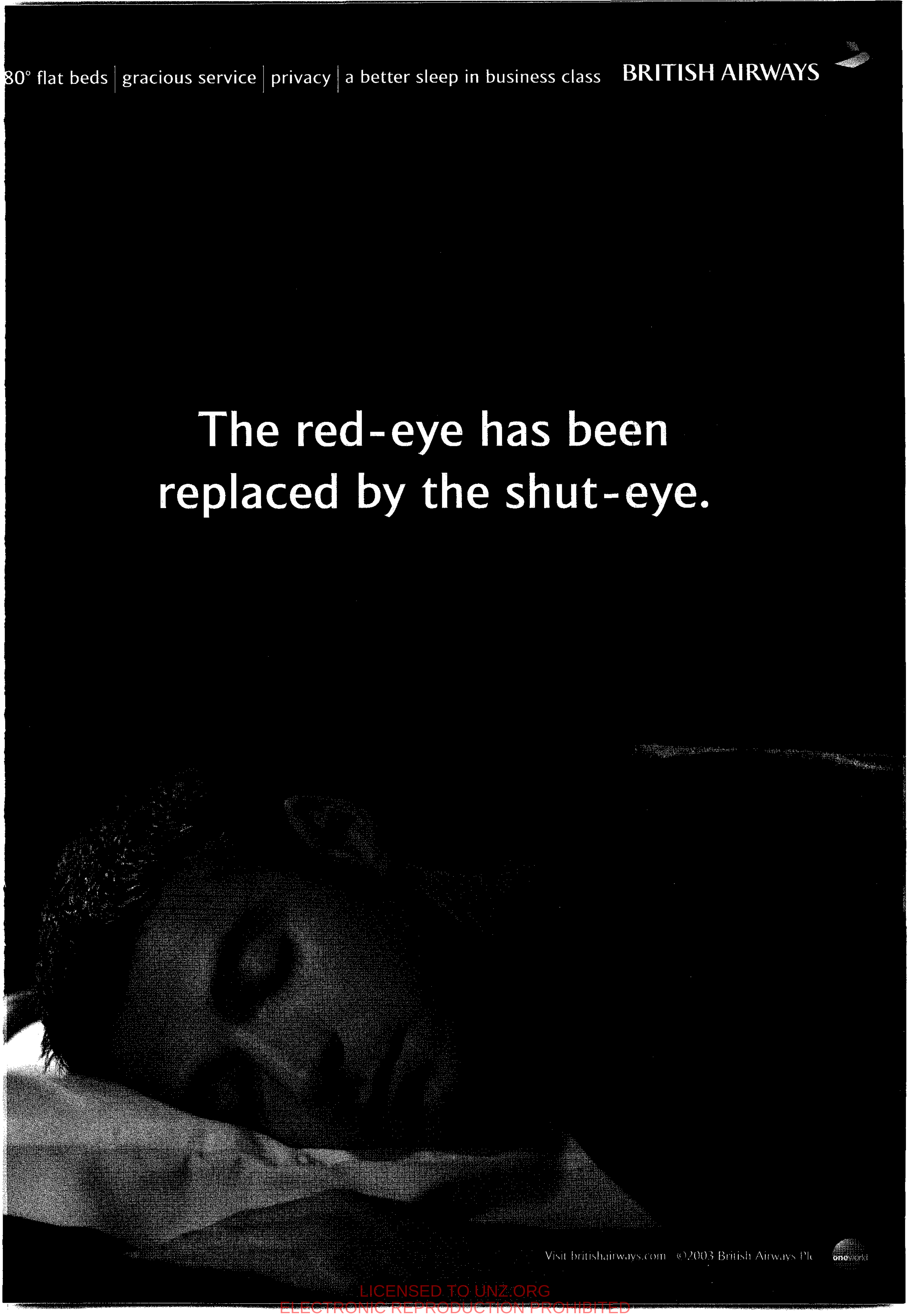
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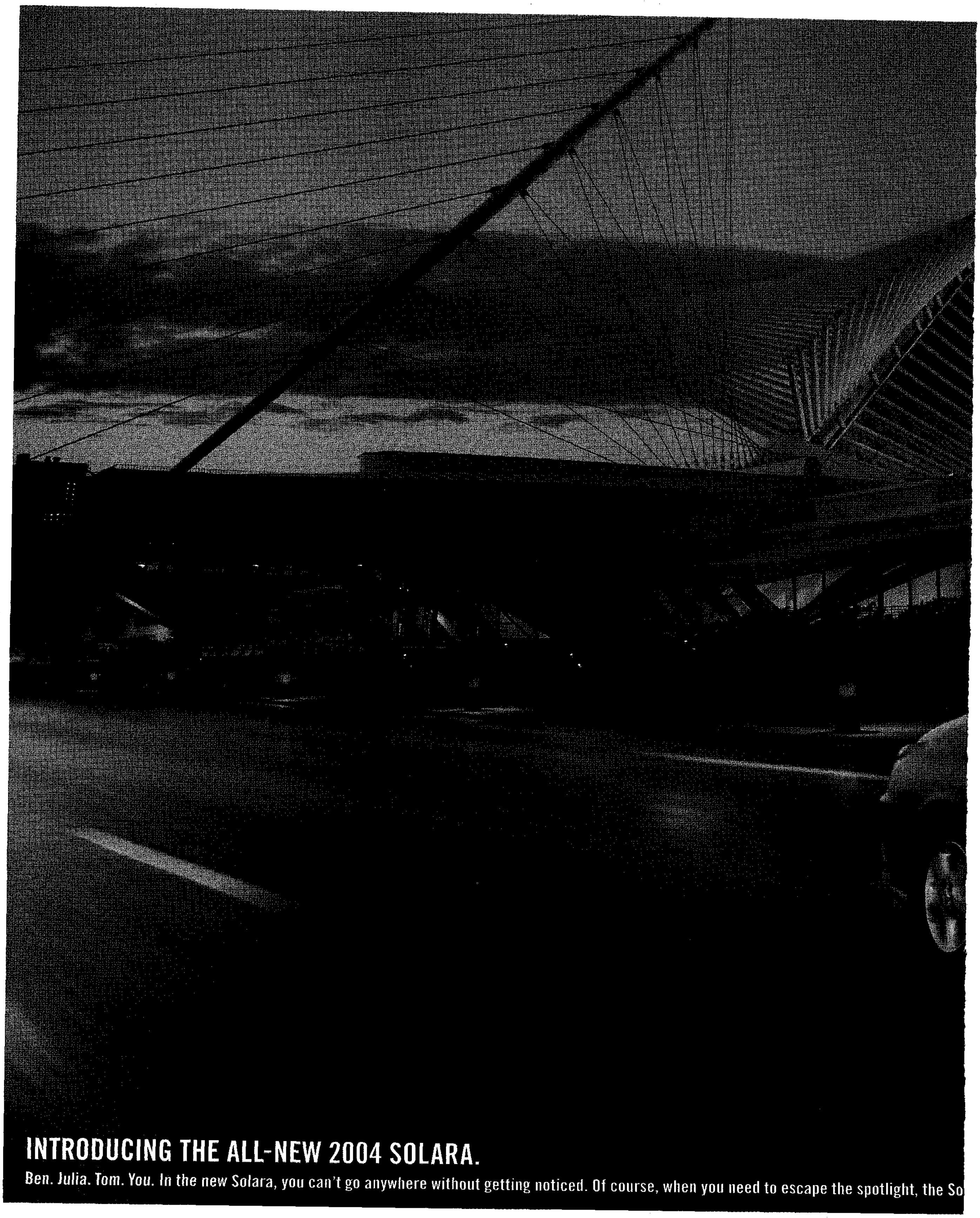

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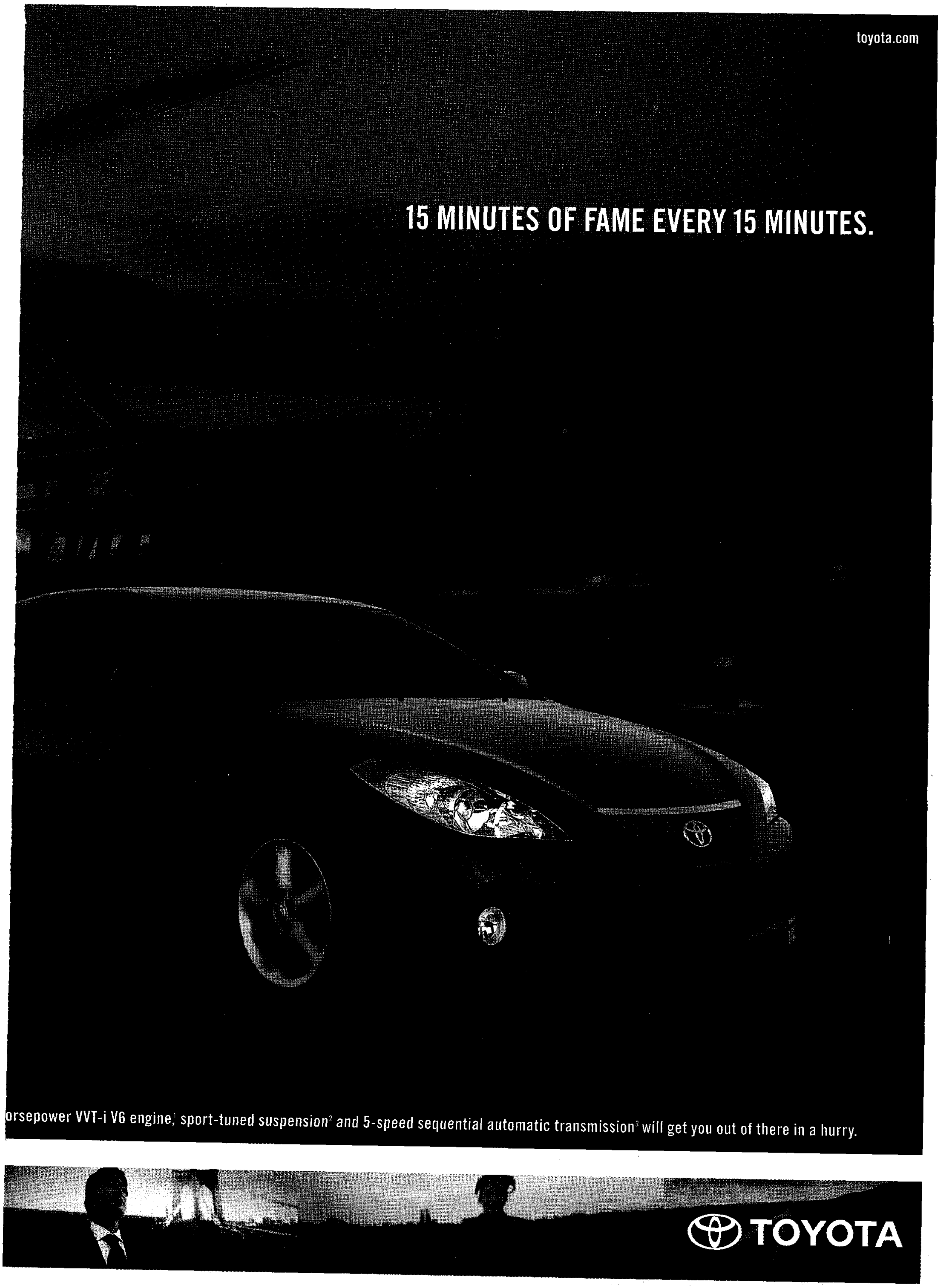

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THE THEATRE
OPENINGS AND PREVIEWS

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CAROLINE, OR CHANGE
Tony Kushner's new musical, with music by Jeanine Tesori, is set in Louisiana in 1963 and tells the story of the friendship between a black maid and the son of the Jewish family she works for. Directed by George C. Wolfe. In previews. (Public, 425 Lafayette St. 212-239-6200.)

THE COOK
Michael John Garcés directs a new drama by Eduardo Machado about a cook for a rich family in pre-Communist Cuba, who stays on as the caretaker of her employers' house after Fidel Castro comes to power. One preview on Nov. 19. Opens Nov. 20 at 8. (Intar 53, at 508 W. 53rd St. 212-279-4200.)

DOLLHOUSE
In a twisted take on Ibsen's "A Doll's House," adapted and directed by Lee Breuer and produced by Mabou Mines, a cast of men shorter than four feet tall bully towering women. Opens Nov. 19 at 7:30. (St. Ann's Warehouse, 38 Water St., Dumbo, Brooklyn. 718-254-8779.)

HENRY IV
An adaptation by Dakin Matthews of Shakespeare's history play combines Part I and Part II into a performance that lasts under four hours. With Kevin Kline as Falstaff, Michael Hayden as Prince Hal, Audra McDonald as Lady Percy, Dana Ivey as Mistress Quickly, and Ethan Hawke as Hotspur. Directed by Jack O'Brien. One preview on Nov. 19. Opens Nov. 20 at 5:45. (Vivian Beaumont, Lincoln Center. 212-239-6200.)

I AM MY OWN WIFE
Doug Wright's one-man play about a real-life German transvestite who survived the Nazis and the Communists—with all parts brilliantly played by Jefferson Mays—jumps to Broadway after a successful Off Broadway run. Directed by Moisés Kaufman. In previews. (Lyceum, 149 W. 45th St. 212-239-6200.)

JACKIE MASON'S LAUGHING ROOM ONLY
He's back. Opens Nov. 19 at 8. (Brooks Atkinson, 256 W. 47th St. 212-307-7171.)

JUVENILIA
A campus-seduction comedy by Wendy MacLeod ("The House of Yes") comes to Playwrights Horizons in a production directed by David Petrarca. In previews. (416 W. 42nd St. 212-279-4200.)

NEVER GONNA DANCE
A new musical based on the Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers vehicle "Swing Time," featuring the music of Jerome Kern. Directed by Michael Greif. In previews. (Broadhurst, 235 W. 44th St. 212-239-6200.)

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
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NOTHING BUT THE TRUTH
A new play by John Kani, set in South Africa in the postapartheid era, centers on the emotions of a black South African man whose brother has died in exile. Directed by Janice Honeyman. In previews. (Mitzi E. Newhouse, Lincoln Center. 212-239-6200.)

ROSE'S DILEMMA
Mary Tyler Moore stars in a Manhattan Theatre Club production of a new play by Neil Simon about a famous writer who resolves to write a blockbuster. Directed by Lynne Meadow. Previews begin Nov. 20. (City Center, 131 W. 55th St. 212-581-1212.)

A VERY MERRY UNAUTHORIZED CHILDREN'S SCIENTOLOGY PAGEANT
The irreverent theatrical group Les Frères Corbusier presents a musical production about the history of Scientology, performed by children, with text and music by Kyle Jarrow. Directed by Alex Timbers. Previews begin Nov. 20. (The Tank, 432 W. 42nd St. 212-868-4444.)

WONDERFUL TOWN
A revival of the musical based on the book "My Sister Eileen," which was derived from Ruth McKenney's *New Yorker* stories about her sister in Greenwich Village. With music by Leonard Bernstein and lyrics by Comden and Green. Directed by Kathleen Marshall. In previews. Opens Nov. 23 at 6:30. (Al Hirschfeld, 302 W. 45th St. 212-239-6200.)

WOOSTER GROUP
The downtown company begins a monthlong run of a work in progress featuring Elizabeth LeCompte, Jennifer Tipton, Kate Valk, and other regulars. Opens Nov. 19 at 8. (Performing Garage, 33 Wooster St. 212-966-3651.)

OPENED RECENTLY

ANNA IN THE TROPICS
Nilo Cruz's Pulitzer Prize-winning play about a man who reads Tolstoy to workers in a Cuban cigar factory stars Jimmy Smits and Daphne Rubin-Vega. Directed by Emily Mann. (Royale, 242 W. 45th St. 212-239-6200.)

THE BEARD OF AVON
New York Theatre Workshop presents a new play by Amy Freed ("Freedomland") about the longstanding debate over whether William Shakespeare wrote his own plays. With Mary Louise Wilson, as Queen Elizabeth, and Tim Blake Nelson, as the putative Bard. Sets by Neil Patel. Directed by Doug Hughes. (79 E. 4th St. 212-239-6200.)

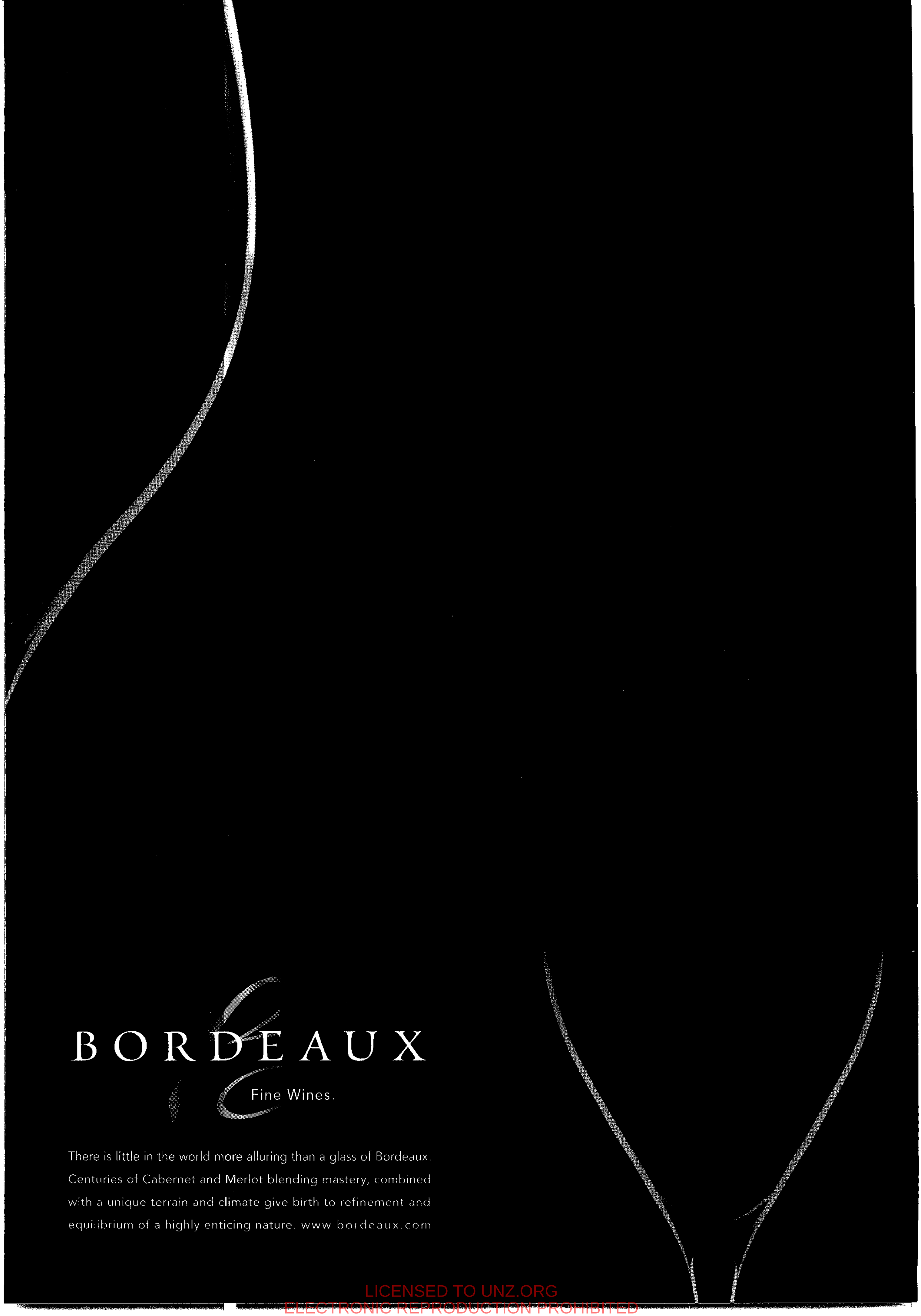
THE BOY FROM OZ
The charming, wildly hardworking performer Hugh Jackman has been put in the awkward position of having to prove that the Australian singer-songwriter Peter Allen—who was discovered by Judy Garland and who married her daughter Liza Minnelli—is worthy of our attention. Just this side of overly hunky, Jackman is a dream of sweetness. He does everything he can to sell the show, and the girls in the audience love him. But he is undermined by the production that swirls around him. (Reviewed in our issue of 10/27/03.) (Imperial, 249 W. 45th St. 212-239-6200.)

BRIGHT IDEAS
The first act is a tour de force, and even if the second act turns into a tour de too much force, Eric Coble's farce about parents who will stop at nothing to get their son into a choice preschool has physical and verbal comedy to spare. Seana Kofoed is the demented mother, Paul Fitzgerald is her compliant husband, and Orlagh Cassidy, Linda Marie Larson, and Colman Domingo shine in multiple roles. Directed by John Rando. (East 13th Street Theatre, 136 E. 13th St. 212-279-4200.)

THE CARETAKER
No other contemporary playwright has explored the nasty ways in which fathers and sons construct each other—and then smash the models—with as much vibrancy and perspicacity as Harold Pinter. In "The Caretaker," his breakthrough play from 1960, two brothers—Aston, who is slow and deliberate, and Mick, a presentable sociopath—allow an old drifter named Davies to stay in their house, tacitly inviting him to mend their cracked minds and howling hearts, as if he were the father they'd been waiting for all their lives. In the Roundabout's production, Patrick Stewart, as Davies, and Kyle MacLachlan, as Aston, perform well under David Jones's sensitive direction; Aidan Gillen, as Mick, is both lethal and adorable, a cuddly gutter rat. (11/17/03) (American Airlines Theatre, 227 W. 42nd St. 212-719-1300.)

CAT ON A HOT TIN ROOF
The linchpin of this superb revival of Tennessee Williams's mid-fifties masterpiece is Ned Beatty, who plays Big Daddy Pollitt, the owner of "twenty-eight thousand acres of the richest land this side of the valley Nile." Beatty is a dangerous actor, and he catches all of Big Daddy's cunning and cruelty. Ashley Judd, as Maggie the Cat, and Jason Patric, as her husband, Big Daddy's son Brick, are worthy opponents. Judd brings movie-star beauty

WILLIAM STEIG, 6/18/84



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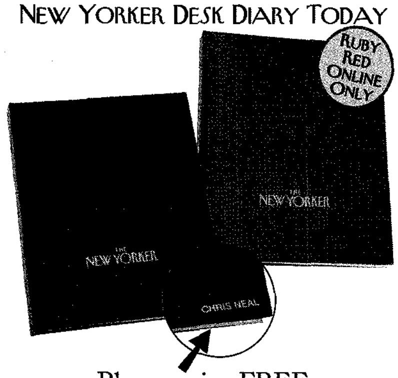

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and steeliness to the role—and, beneath her ladylike veneer, a brave heart. Directed by Anthony Page. (11/10/03) (Music Box, 239 W. 45th St. 212-239-6200.)

FAME ON 42ND STREET
The movie that became a television series now becomes a musical. (Reviewed in this issue.) (Little Shubert, 422 W. 42nd St. 212-239-6200.)

IRON
In Rona Munro's strong new play, a young woman visits her mother, imprisoned for killing her father, after an absence of fifteen years. Munro's crystal-clear writing reveals the universal in the specific without ever seeming obvious. A powerhouse performance by Lisa Emery, as the mother, propels the drama. Directed by Anna D. Shapiro. (Manhattan Theatre Club, 131 W. 55th St. 212-581-1212.)

JULIUS CAESAR
Moonwork's new production of the play makes very good use of video—Roman reactions to Caesar's murder are delivered as television news reports. Antony (Christopher Haas) and Cassius (Mason Pettit) stand out among a generally strong cast. Intelligently directed by Gregory Wolfe. (Connelly, 220 E. 4th St. 212-868-4444. Closes Nov. 23.)

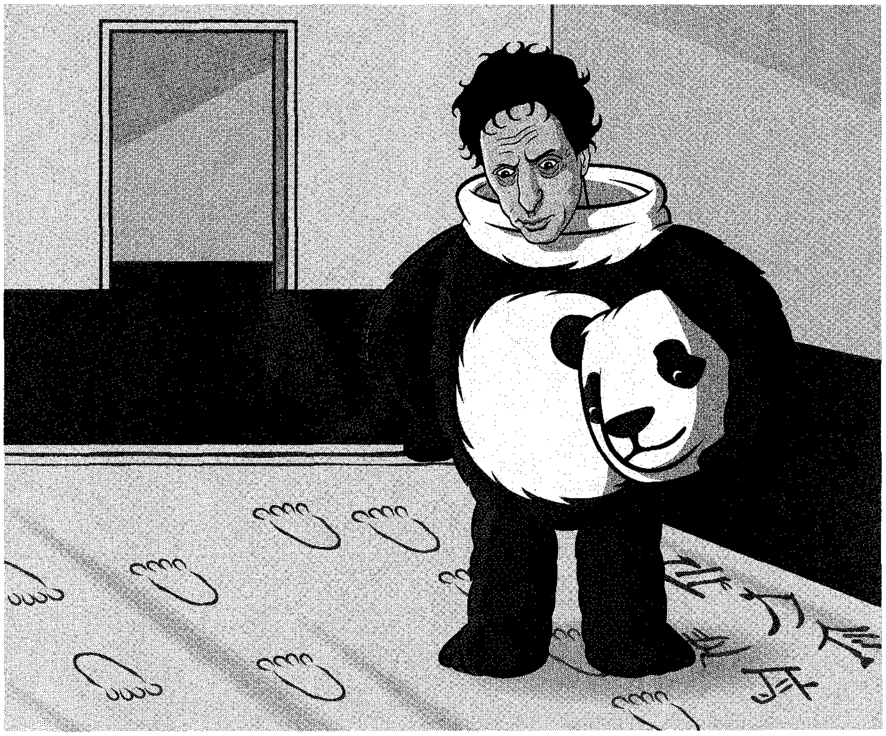
THE LADY NEXT DOOR
In the Folksbiene's spirited revival of a comedy from 1915 by Leon Kobrin, a love triangle between Eastern European immigrants turns a tenement into a Yiddish Melrose Place. With English supertitles. Directed by Allen Lewis Rickman. (Folksbiene Yiddish Theatre, J.C.C., 334 Amsterdam Ave. 212-239-6200.)

Manilow. Friedman's melodies play upon the emotions as lightly as a sledgehammer upon an anvil. But the cast of Broadway veterans endow the songs with a healthy dose of humor and irony, as when Anne Runolfsson and Michael Hunsaker crawl all over the piano (and each other) in the operatic love ballad "Two Different Worlds." Directed by Mark Waldrop. (Upstairs at Studio 54, at 254 W. 54th St. 212-445-0190.)

THE LONG CHRISTMAS RIDE HOME
Paula Vogel's affecting play begins with three siblings on a fateful Christmas Day and flashes forward to the consequences the day has for them as adults. The production is enhanced by Basil Twist's Bunraku puppets, which represent the siblings as children. Directed by Mark Brokaw. (Vineyard, 108 E. 15th St. 212-353-0303.)

THE MACGUFFIN?
This serial cloak-and-dagger screwball comedy plays every Monday at the Bowery Poetry Club through mid-December. Written by Jason Rhyne and Terry Withers. Withers and his sister, Brenda Withers ("Matt & Ben"), lead the cast. Directed by Adam Gerdts. (Bowery Poetry Club, 308 Bowery, near Bleecker St. 212-713-5446.)

THE MERCHANT OF VENICE
Shakespeare's exploration of xenophobia in a Venetian court plays at the Pearl, in repertory with a buoyant staging of Sheridan's comedy "The Rivals." Dominic Cuskern's Shylock is wry and agonized, but, alas, Celeste Ciulla makes Portia's orchestration of his demise seem more sophomoric than crafty. Directed by Shepard Sobel. (Theatre 80, at 80 St. Marks Pl. 212-598-9802.)



Philip Glass composed the score for Sat Hon's Taoist dance "The Great Bear Circle."

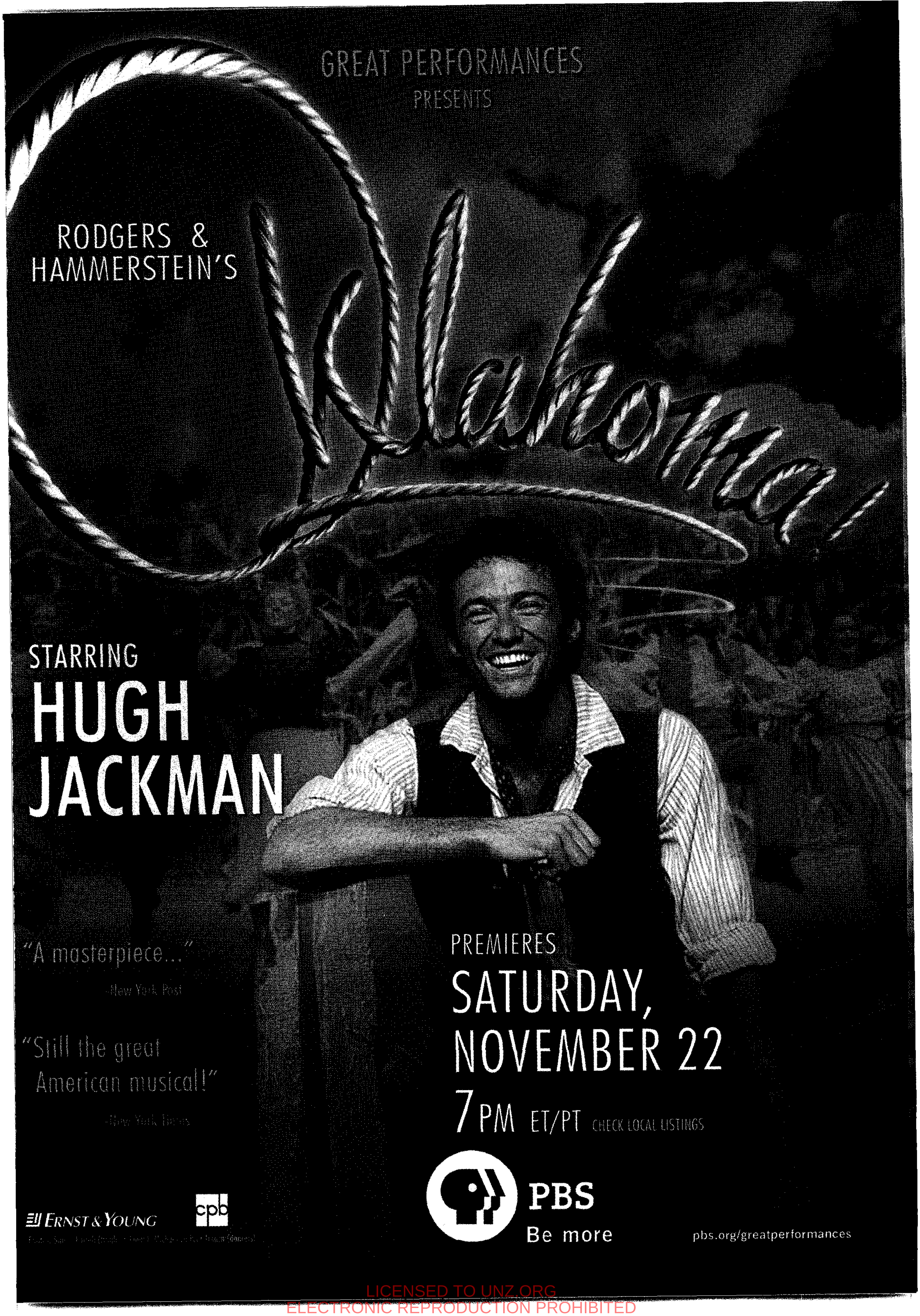
MICHAEL WELDON

LEGACY CODES
Cherylene Lee's new play, in which a Chinese-American scientist is accused of espionage, was inspired by the Wen Ho Lee case. Using a plot device that involves computer codes, Lee shows how seemingly laudable actions can be driven by reprehensible motives and vice versa. The second act comes dangerously close to turning histrionic, but Les J. N. Mau, as the scientist, and Jackson Loo, as his son, keep the evening on track. Directed by Ron Nakahara. (West End, 263 W. 86th St. 212-279-4200.)

LISTEN TO MY HEART
An unabashedly sentimental musical review by the composer and lyricist David Friedman, who has written music for Kathie Lee Gifford and Barry

THE MOONLIGHT ROOM
Two teen-agers wait in an emergency room for news of a friend who has overdosed. They bite their nails, bounce their knees, tug backpack straps, and twirl strands of hair, evincing a believable state of adolescent frailty. Laura Breckenridge and Brendan Sexton III have a gift for the small physical gesture. Written by Tristine Skyler; directed by Jeff Cohen. (Tribeca Playhouse, 111 Reade St. 212-868-4444.)

OLDEST LIVING CONFEDERATE WIDOW TELLS ALL
Ellen Burstyn stars in an adaptation by Martin Tahse of Allan Gurganus's saga about a hundred-year-old woman's memories of her long life. Directed by Don Scardino. (Longacre, 220 W. 48th St. 212-239-6200.)



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THE RETREAT FROM MOSCOW
Resignation has settled over the union of an English couple, Edward (John Lithgow), a high-school history teacher, and Alice (Eileen Atkins), in William Nicholson's powerful evocation of a dying marriage. As Lithgow plays him, Edward is a big, passive man with a small, dithering voice; he hides behind his books, his silences, and his vagueness. Alice, cunningly shaded by Atkins's keen intelligence and sense of humor, is both an appealingly batty woman and an emotional terrorist. We are told that Napoleon took four hundred and fifty thousand men into Russia and that only twenty thousand of them survived. Edward and Alice's reserved son Jamie (Ben Chaplin) may not be one of the survivors in the family battle. Directed by Daniel Sullivan. (11/3/03) (Booth, 222 W. 45th St. 212-239-6200.)

"Dollhouse," Lee Breuer and Mabou Mines' quirky adaptation of Ibsen, is now playing at St. Ann's Warehouse, in Dumbo.

DUDLEY REED

SEXAHOLIX: A LOVE STORY
John Leguizamo returns to Broadway with an update of his comic one-man show. (Broadway Theatre, Broadway at 53rd St. 212-239-6200.)

TABOO
A musical about the London club scene of the early eighties, Boy George, and the performance artist Leigh Bowery. Directed by Christopher Renshaw. (Reviewed in this issue.) (Plymouth, 235 W. 45th St. 212-239-6200.)

TATJANA IN COLOR
Beverly Cleary meets Nabokov in Julia Jordan's subversive new play, loosely based on a true story, about a twelve-year-old Austrian girl (Kate Wetherhead) who becomes obsessed with the artist Egon Schiele (Glenn Fitzgerald). Beautifully directed by Will Pomerantz. (Culture Project, 45 Bleecker St. 212-307-4100. Closes Nov. 30.)

THE VIOLET HOUR
Robert Sean Leonard has the clean-cut good looks of an unremarkable businessman, but his lightly worn officiousness makes him attractive; you want to unleash the passion behind the starched shirt. In a new play by Richard Greenberg ("Take Me Out"), Leonard plays John Pace Seavering (the name is pure, monogrammed privilege), a young New York publisher who must choose between a manuscript by his lover and one by a male school friend. Directed by Evan Yionoulis. (11/17/03) (Biltmore, 261 W. 47th St. 212-239-6200.)

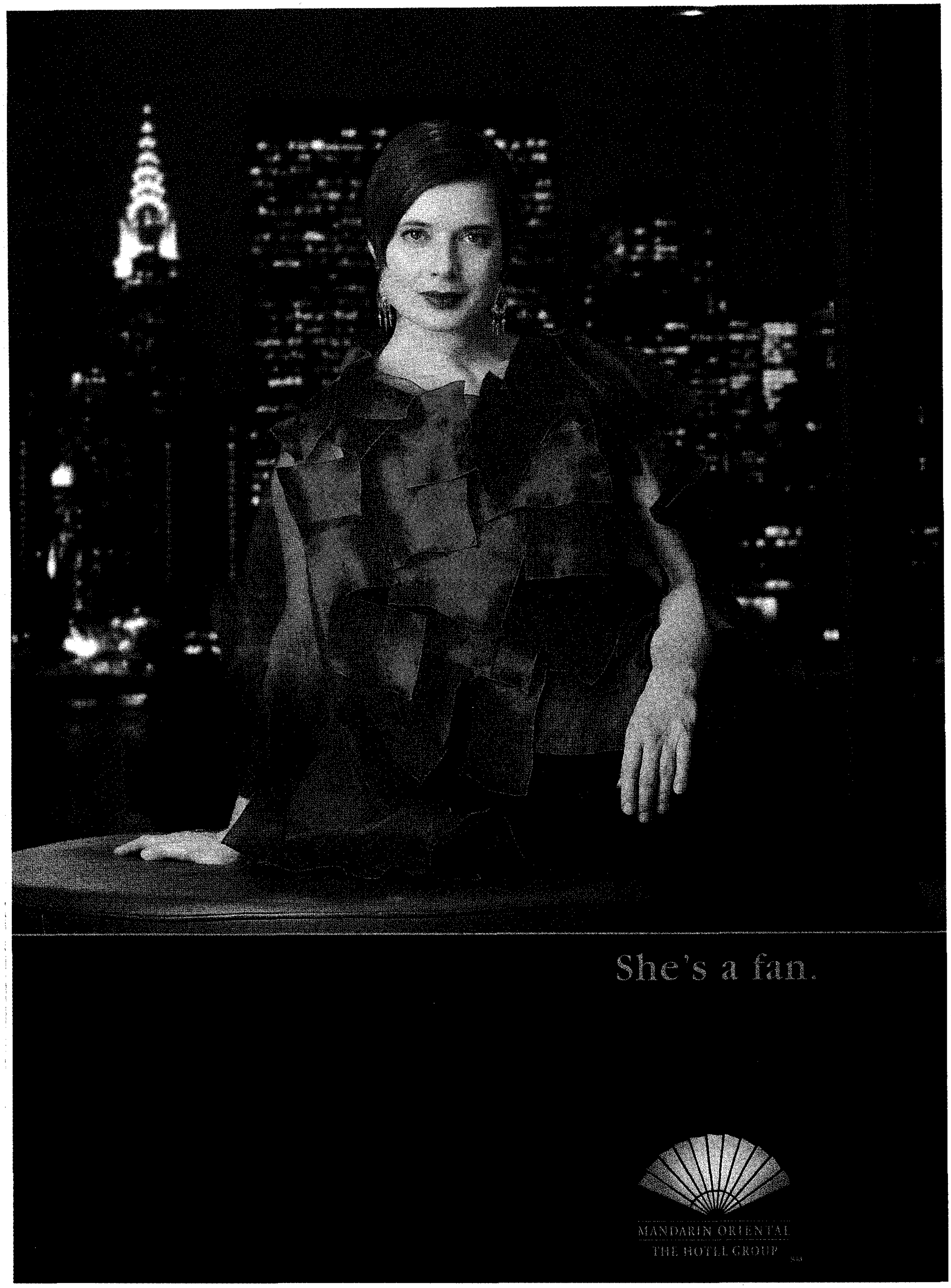
WHERE WE'RE BORN
Marin Ireland leads the cast in a new play by Lucy Thurber, about a young woman who returns to the poor town in Massachusetts where she grew up. Directed by Will Frears. (Rattlestick, 224 Waverly Pl. 212-868-4444.)

WICKED
A new musical telling the backstory of "The Wizard of Oz" is an exercise in high camp. "The Wizard of Oz" was dedicated to hope; "Wicked" is dedicated to irony. The Wicked Witch, Elphaba (played by the excellent Idina Menzel), turns out to be good, while Glinda the Good (Kristen Chenoweth) is exposed as a smug, ambitious, manipulative bitch, with little talent for sorcery. (11/10/03) (Gershwin, 222 W. 51st St. 212-307-4100.)

DANCE

NEW YORK CITY BALLET
The company's mammoth celebration of the centennial of Balanchine's birth doesn't really begin until January, but the opening-night gala benefit offers a foretaste with a program that includes "Serenade," the first ballet that Mr. B. choreographed in America. Created as an exercise for students in 1934, it remains a testament to how much he could do with the barest materials. "Symphony in C" dates from his brief stint with the Paris Opera, in 1947. Sandwiched between these watershed works is the rarely performed 1963 demi-caractère piece, "Bugaku." (New York State Theatre, Lincoln Center. 212-870-5570. Nov. 25 at 7.)

CLOUD GATE DANCE THEATRE OF TAIWAN
Bach's magisterial Six Suites for Solo Cello provide the accompaniment for "Moon Water," Lin Hwai-min's evening-length dance based on Tai Chi movement. Though the work may be seen as a study in Taoist philosophy, from a purely aesthetic point of view it is ravishing. Deep lunges and rippling torsos and arms become a flock of birds in motion or a spilling fountain. As a thin plane of water spreads along the stage, the dancers delicately splash and slide. The light fabric of their costumes clings to them like the drapery on Greek sculpture. (BAM's Howard Gilman Opera House, 30 Lafayette Ave. 718-636-4100. Nov. 20-22 at 7:30.)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DANCE CUBA
Billed as the Cuban "Riverdance," this troupe of sixteen women, led by the choreographer Lizt Alfonso, is more like the Rockettes. They wear flamenco pumps instead of tap shoes and swirl ruffled skirts or black flared trousers instead of showing leg, but the disciplined precision is the same. Accompanied by musicians who play and sing Afro-Cuban music and Spanish flamenco. (New Victory, 209 W. 42nd St. 212-239-6200. Nov. 21 at 7, Nov. 22 at 2 and 7, and Nov. 23 at noon and 5. Through Nov. 30.)

JONATHAN RIEDEL DANCE COMPANY
With the help of his colleagues at the José Limón company, the emerging choreographer Jonathan Riedel presents a début program of impressive range. Abstract works, such as "Of Apes and Angels," set to Vivaldi, show a sophisticated use of space, sending dancers eddying in near-miss patterns. In "Upchar's Warbler," the second in a series of dances based on Edward Gorey illustrations, Riedel has found a way of kinetically conveying the shrunken hopefulness of Gorey's gaunt figures. And in "Uspud: Ballet Chrétien," an 1892 Erik Satie ballet never before produced, he artfully juxtaposes mystic narration with a naturalistic rendering of a contemporary domestic drama. The pianist Richard Cameron-Wolfe accompanies. (Joyce SoHo, 155 Mercer St. 212-334-7479. Nov. 20-23 at 8.)

"THE GREAT BEAR CIRCLE"
During the Tang dynasty, whenever disaster struck China, a hundred and eight dancers performed the Great Bear Circle dance for seven days and nights to calm the universe. In response to the attacks of 9/11, the downtown Taoist master Sat Hon has assembled twenty-five dancers to present a compressed form of the rite. Philip Glass, who wrote the score, plays the piano, Andrew Sherman plays the flute, and Diane Wolkstein narrates. (Interfaith Center of New York, 40 E. 30th St. 212-685-4242. Nov. 19-20 at 6:30.)

KOOSIL-JA
The Korean-born dancer incorporates video by Benton-C Bainbridge, music by Geoff Matters, and design by Liminal Projects, Omar Khan, and Laura Garófalo into an evening of dance in Dumbo. (Nest, 88 Front St., Brooklyn. 212-375-0189. Nov. 19-23 at 8. Through Dec. 21.)

"NEWSTEPS"
Six downtown choreographers, including Monica Bill Barnes, Jenny Rocha, and Dana Ruttenberg, present an evening of new work. (Mulberry Street Theatre, 70 Mulberry St. 212-349-0438. Nov. 20-22 at 8.)

"KLEP"
In an ensemble work by the Julia Ritter Performance Group, seven dancers, led by Christine Bodwitch, create scenarios that illustrate the notion (read aloud and repeated as a voice-over) that "fear is a kleptomaniac in the shop of possibilities." The dancing is accompanied by footage of children on their first day of school, on their first bike ride, and so on. With music by Bradford Reed and text by Michael Duke. (Danspace Project at St. Mark's In-the-Bouwerie, Second Ave. at 10th St. 212-674-8194. Nov. 20-23 at 8:30.)

"DESCENT"
Noémie Lafrance's dizzying, site-specific dance, performed along several flights of a spiral staircase in the Clocktower building, in Tribeca, has its final week of performances. (108 Leonard St. 212-868-4444. Nov. 20 and Nov. 23 at 7 and 8:30 and Nov. 21-22 at 7, 8:30, and 10.)

GARTH FAGAN DANCE
Set to the music of Shostakovich, Villa-Lobos, and Jelly Roll Morton, Fagan's newest work, "DanceCollageForRomie," celebrates the late painter Romare Bearden, with whom he shares a favorite subject: African-American life. Performed with last year's "Translation Transition" and excerpts from Fagan's 1991 collaboration with Wynton Marsalis, "Griot New York." (Joyce Theatre, 175 Eighth Ave., at 19th St. 212-242-0800. Nov. 18-22 at 8 and Nov. 23 at 2 and 7:30.)

NOCHE FLAMENCA
The tenth-anniversary performances of Martin Santangelo's Madrid-based company. His six musicians are male, but the three dancers are women, one of them Santangelo's wife, Soledad Barrio, whose dancing exemplifies the authenticity, ardor, and depth of the troupe's pared-down aesthetic. (Lucille Lortel, 121 Christopher St. 212-239-6200. Nov. 18-21 at 8, Nov. 22 at 3 and 8, and Nov. 23 at 3. Through Nov. 30.)

"CONSTRUCTION COMPANY SUNDAY SERIES"
In a shared program, Pooh Kaye and Sally Silvers improvise a duet together and perform individual works. In "Wild Girl and Bad Dog," Kaye interacts with animation on a screen; in "Tidy Shockproof," Silvers performs a duet with the poet Kim Rosenfield. A film is also screened: "SSS," dedicated to the spirit of the early nineteen-nineties in the East Village. (10 E. 18th St. 212-924-7882. Nov. 23 at 5.)

NIGHT LIFE
CONCERTS

WHITE STRIPES
Sidelined earlier this year by the guitarist and songwriter Jack White's thumb injury, the Detroit duo returns to New York to reward its patient fans. Though the tabloids have recently been salivating over Jack's dalliance with the actress Renée Zellweger, the group, powered by Meg White's atavistic drumming, is as focussed as ever. (Roseland, 239 W. 52nd St. 212-307-7171. Nov. 18-20 at 8.)

DEFTONES
In an attempt to distance itself from the nü-metal scene it helped define, this beefy Sacramento band colors its sonic battery with shades of eighties alternative rock, making references to such non-metal acts as the Cure and Depeche Mode, belying the notion that they are Cro-Magnons without artistic aspirations. (Hammerstein Ballroom, Manhattan Center, 311 W. 34th St. 212-307-7171. Nov. 20 at 7:30.)

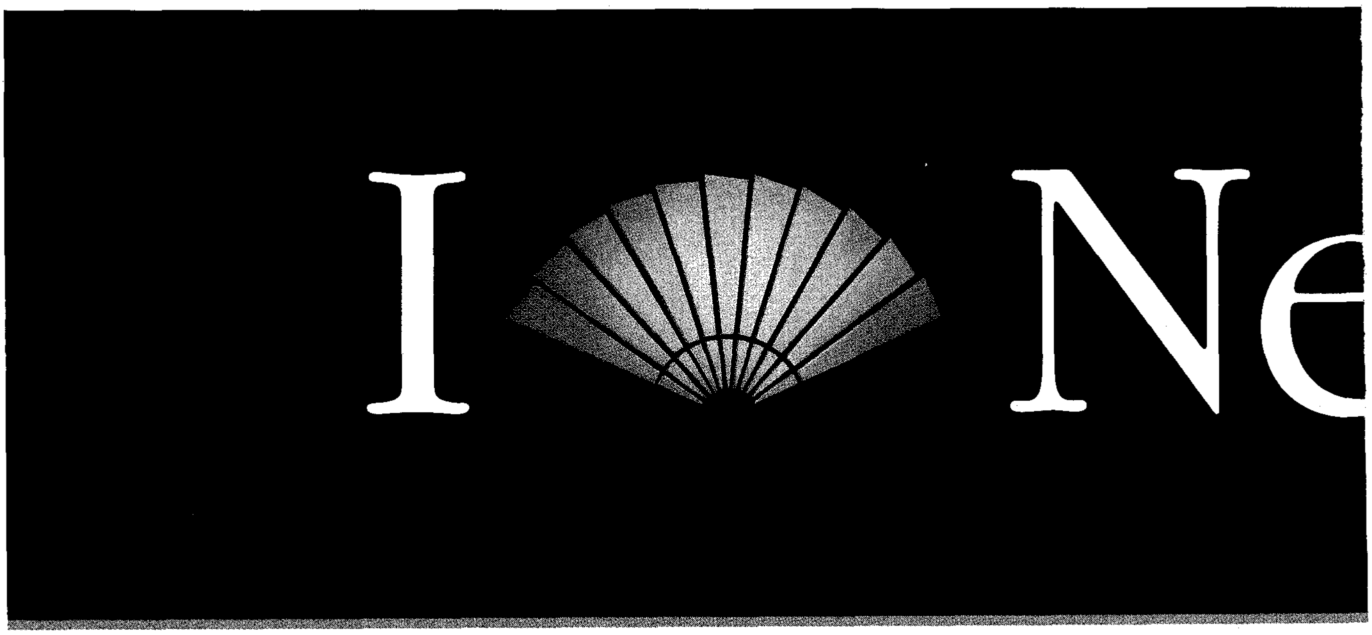
WORLD MUSIC INSTITUTE
Nov. 20 at 8: The institute's "Interpretations" series continues with a double bill of the pianist **Michelle Rosewoman & Quintessence** and the drummer **Susie Ibarra.** (Merkin Concert Hall, 129 W. 67th St.) Nov. 22 at 8: The Russian folk ensemble **Svetilen** makes its U.S. début with a program of centuries-old choral music. (Town Hall, 123 W. 43rd St. For more information about both shows, call 212-545-7536.)

KORN / LIMP BIZKIT
As rap rock's glory fades, these two bands, mentors and protégés respectively, are hanging on for dear life. Once on the top of the heap, the scowling, dreadlocked Korn took a bit of a critical drubbing after their fifth album, 2002's "Untouchables," failed to yield as many angst-filled anthems as their previous records did. The band's new release, "Take a Look in the Mirror," attempts to remedy this by stripping the music to its rawest elements. Limp Bizkit, meanwhile, bravely carries on following the departure of the oddball guitarist Wes Borland (now replaced by the former Snot guitarist, Mike Smith). To compound problems, the vocalist Fred Durst's elephantine ego has taken him on a Courtney Love-esque trajectory, much to the band's discredit. (Hammerstein Ballroom. Nov. 21 at 7:30.)

JAMES BROWN
Soul Brother No. 1, a.k.a. Mr. Please Please Please, the Hardest Working Man in Show Business, and the Godfather of Soul, returns to Harlem. (Apollo Theatre, 253 W. 125th St. 212-531-5300. Nov. 21-22 at 8.)

ROBERT RANDOLPH
This astounding young pedal steel guitarist from Orange, New Jersey, plays with a rare grace. He started out in the House of God church, where he followed the tradition of "sacred steel" gospel music, but he has become a big presence on more secular terrain. Backed by the Family Band, he is touring in support of his début studio album, "Unclassified." With the soulful Tex-Mex sounds of **Los Lonely Boys.** (Roseland. Nov. 22 at 7:30.)

BARRY HARRIS
The stalwart pianist uses this annual event to present rising talents. It also features fellow bebop veterans who've kept the faith, among them the sax-



ophonists Jimmy Heath and Charles Davis, the trombonist Slide Hampton, and the legendary pianist Chris Anderson. (Symphony Space, Broadway at 95th St. 212-864-5400. Nov. 22 at 8.)

JOHN MAYER
This youthful singer-songwriter scored well with his 2001 release, "Room for Squares." Brimming with guitar-driven pop songs and plangent self-deprecation, the album made girls swoon and cash registers chime. His rather literally titled follow-up, "Heavier Things," polishes the production a bit with more expansive instrumentation, but ultimately it doesn't mess with the winning formula. (Madison Square Garden. 212-307-7171. Nov. 24 at 7:30.)

JAY-Z
The pride of Brooklyn's Marcy projects approaches a decade atop the rap world with a new disk, "The Black Album," and a shrewd career move—he's calling it his final solo release. (Madison Square Garden. 212-307-7171. Nov. 25 at 8.)

CLUBS

Musicians and night-club proprietors live complicated lives; it's advisable to call ahead to confirm engagements.

B. B. KING BLUES CLUB & GRILL
237 W. 42nd St. (212-997-4144)—Nov. 21-22: **Dr. John,** the New Orleans pianist whose gruff-throated, back-porch take on R. & B. has been much imitated but never matched.

BOTTOM LINE
15 W. 4th St., at Mercer St. (212-228-6300)—Nov. 19: The cosmic cowboy **Jerry Jeff Walker.** Nov. 20: **John Gorka.** On his calm but groovy new album, "Old Futures Gone," the acclaimed singer-songwriter and leader of the new-folk movement looks at life and politics, backed by leading session men from the pop-rock and world-music genres.

BOWERY BALLROOM
6 Delancey St. (212-533-2111)—Nov. 20-21: The beloved U.K. space-pop combo **Broadcast.**

IRVING PLAZA
17 Irving Pl., at 15th St. (212-777-6800)—Nov. 22: The piano-driven California quintet **Something Corporate** hopes to be America's answer to Coldplay. Nov. 23: The Swedish foursome **Millencolin** (named for a tricky skateboard stunt) plays energetic punk pop that owes more to the sound of Southern California than to its own chilly homeland. Nov. 24-26: The meticulous Grateful Dead cover band **Dark Star Orchestra.**

JOE'S PUB
425 Lafayette St. (212-539-8777)—Nov. 19-20: **Diamanda Galas,** whose voice could reduce this intimate venue to smoldering ashes, stops by for two evenings of strikingly emotive music and aggressively held convictions regarding victims of genocide and H.I.V. Galas also delves into blues, R. & B., soul, and country music in a style that is very much her own. Nov. 25: The veteran soul singer **Gwen McCrae.**

MAKOR
35 W. 67th St. (212-601-1000)—Nov. 23: The **Asylum Street Spankers,** an energetic group of acoustic-blues-loving musicians out of Austin, Texas.

MERCURY LOUNGE
217 E. Houston St. (212-260-4700)—Nov. 25: The local singer **Frank Bango** and his songwriting partner Richy Vesecky craft old-fashioned Brill Building-style pop songs with references to Preston Sturges, champagne bubbles, etc. Bango will be backed here by his band, the Magic Fingers, and an all-girl string section, the Lady Fingers.

PETE'S CANDY STORE
709 Lorimer St., Williamsburg, Brooklyn. (718-302-3770)—Nov. 22: **Alina Simone,** a Ukrainian-born singer with a potent and ethereal voice, writes wistful songs laced with spare guitar playing that have a Cat Power-like quality. With the local singer-songwriter **Naysayer** and the guitarist **Anders Parker,** of the indie-rock outfit Varnaline.

S.O.B.'S
204 Varick St., at W. Houston St. (212-243-4940)—Nov. 25: The 1973 Pink Floyd album, "Dark Side of the Moon," spent more than twenty-six years on the *Billboard* charts, a record. The reggae collective **Easy Star All-Stars** recently covered the art-rock masterpiece, rendering it entirely in a heady dub-reggae style on "Dub Side of the Moon," which has been intriguing and appalling Floyd purists in equal measures. This live show, featuring such album guests as Dr. Israel, promises similar excitement. Dining.

WEBSTER HALL
125 E. 11th St. (212-353-1600)—Nov. 22: The "Tell Us the Truth" tour brings in the wry neo-folk rocker **Billy Bragg,** the Audioslave guitarist Tom Morello (performing as the **Nightwatchman**), the country-rock rebel **Steve Earle,** and others for a night of music protesting media consolidation and exploitative trade.

JAZZ AND STANDARDS

ALGONQUIN HOTEL
59 W. 44th St. (212-840-6800)—Starting Nov. 18: The cabaret icon **Andrea Marcovicci** embraces the enchanting songs of Frank Loesser ("Guys and Dolls," "How to Succeed in Business Without Really Trying"). Dining.

BIRDLAND
315 W. 44th St. (212-581-3080)—Through Nov. 23: The **Django Reinhardt Festival NY,** now in its fourth year, is a Gallic-Gypsy hootenanny par excellence. With European guitarists and violinists who worship at the altars of Django Reinhardt and Stéphane Grapelli and American horn and rhythm players who are still in touch with old-school swing, a cadre of Continental players, including the seventeen-year-old violinist Alexandre Cavaliere, will be joined throughout the week by the reed players James Carter, Ken Peplowski, Harry Allen, and others. Dining.

BLUE NOTE
131 W. 3rd St., near Sixth Ave. (212-475-8592)—Through Nov. 23: On the heels of the mid-sixties bossa-nova explosion, the pianist **Sergio Mendes** and his Brasil ensembles scored a number of hits with covers of such songs as "Scarborough Fair" and "The Look of Love."

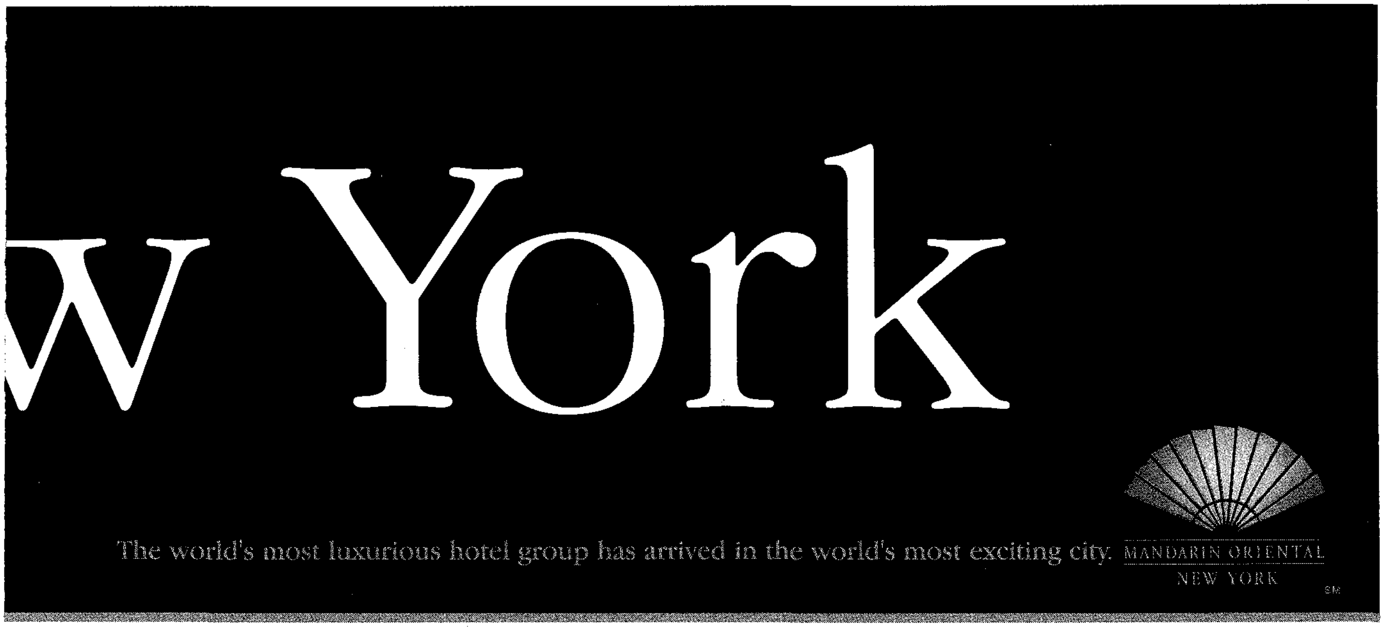
BOTTOM LINE
15 W. 4th St., at Mercer St. (212-228-6300)—Nov. 22: The sexy singer **Ute Lemper** displays a level of vocal strength and interpretive imagination that just isn't found in the vast majority of cabaret artists.

CARLYLE HOTEL
Madison Ave. at 76th St. (212-744-1600)—The Café Carlyle, a snug, windowless enclave in the doorman district, features discreet waiters, wrap-around murals, and, through Dec. 31, **Bobby Short.**

FEINSTEIN'S AT THE REGENCY
540 Park Ave., at 61st St. (212-339-4095)—Through Nov. 22: **Carole Bayer Sager.** She helped write "Groovy Kind of Love" (a 1966 smash for the Mindbenders before Phil Collins returned it to the charts in 1988) and pop hits for Melissa Manchester, as well as movie theme songs: "Nobody Does It Better" (written with her then husband Marvin Hamlisch), from the 1977 James Bond thriller, "The Spy Who Loved Me," got an Oscar nod; "Arthur's Theme (Best That You Can Do)" (written with Burt Bacharach), from the 1981 Dudley Moore comedy, took home a statue. While Sager is no Carole King, she's a genuine demi-legend and a talented recording artist who hasn't performed in New York in years.

IRIDIUM
1650 Broadway, at 51st St. (212-582-2121)—Through Nov. 23: **Michael Brecker,** like his tenor titan buddy Joe Lovano, loves to juggle the instrumental makeup of his bands. This time around, he presents his Quindectet, a fifteen-piece ensemble complete with a string section that made its début on Brecker's acclaimed "Wide Angles" this year. Mondays belong to the electric-guitar innovator **Les Paul.**

JAZZ STANDARD
116 E. 27th St. (212-576-2232)—Nov. 21-23: A beguiling vocalist who deserves wider recognition,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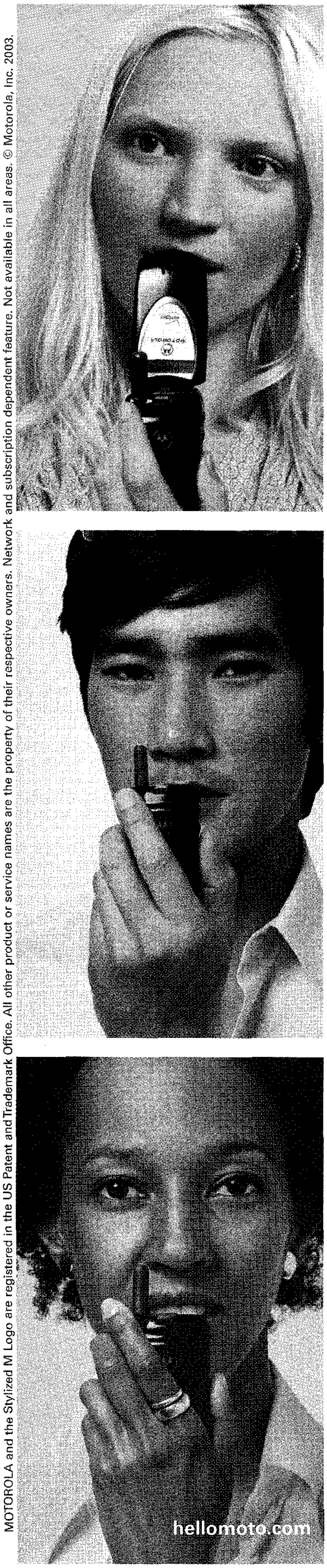

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Carmen Lundy has a new album, "Something to Believe In," which balances standards and sharp originals. Her promising band is bolstered by her brother, the bassist Curtis Lundy. Dining.

JOE'S PUB
425 Lafayette St. (212-539-8777)—Nov. 23: The **Tord Gustavsen** trio. The Norwegian pianist, whose lyrical ECM début, "Changing Places," struck an unexpected chord with U.S. listeners upon its release a few months back, returns. Nov. 24: The vocalist **Judy Kuhn.**

NEUE GALERIE
1048 Fifth Ave., at 86th St. (212-628-6200, ext. 107)—Nov. 20: **Ute Lemper** (see the Bottom Line).

VILLAGE VANGUARD
178 Seventh Ave. S., at 11th St. (212-255-4037)—Through Nov. 23: The **Kenny Barron** sextet. The pianist's current outing features the trumpeter **Terell Stafford** and the saxophonists **Ravi Coltrane** and **Vincent Herring.** Well-crafted compositions, taut arrangements, and elegant, spirited playing are guaranteed. The **Vanguard Jazz Orchestra** holds sway on Mondays.

POP NOTES

DULY NOTED
Blue Note Records has one of the best back catalogues in jazz. There are new jazz artists on its roster, too, but since jazz sales have been moribund for decades, Blue Note has refashioned itself as a home for mainstream pop vocalists: Norah Jones and Cassandra Wilson and, now, the great Irish eccentric Van Morrison and the Memphis soul legend Al Green.

Morrison, always a difficult personality, has been almost impossibly truculent in the past few years (he recently tried to block the publication of a new biography). But his new album, **"What's Wrong with This Picture,"** finds him in a brighter mood: the melodies are tight, the vocals are energetic, and the subject matter transcends his usual muzzy nostalgia for nineteen-fifties Belfast. Of course, good moods are relative. No fewer than four songs address the biography dustup by carping about the drawbacks of fame, and while "Goldfish Bowl" suffers from a failure of perspective—Morrison isn't exactly prime tabloid fodder, no matter what he thinks—other songs are small masterpieces of cantankerousness. Best of all is the title track, a ruefully funny rebuke to fans who pine for the starry-eyed young mystic of "Astral Weeks." "I'm not that person anymore," Morrison sings. "I'm living in the present time / Baby, don't you understand / I left all that jive behind." He also turns in an eerie cover of "Saint James Infirmary," updates "Moondance" with the catchy "Once in a Blue Moon," moves confidently from acoustic folk ("Little Village") to Stax-inflected soul ("Get On With the Show"), and generally demonstrates that his muse is far from exhausted.

Morrison's Blue Note début is anchored in the present; Al Green's seems chained to the past. **"I Can't Stop,"** his first album of entirely secular music in twenty-five years, pairs the singer with Willie Mitchell, the producer responsible for Green's string of seventies hits. Mitchell reassembled many of the musicians who played on those records and even staged the reunion in the same Memphis studio that they used in the seventies. This has all the makings of a séance, but the results aren't nearly haunting enough. Green has always been a sublime interpreter; his covers of Willie Nelson's "Funny How Time Slips Away" and the Bee Gees' "How Can You Mend a Broken Heart" are as central to his canon as any of his own compositions. Here, he writes or co-writes all twelve songs, and it's a mistake—they are earnest and sometimes memorable, but none approach his finest work.

—*Ben Greenman*

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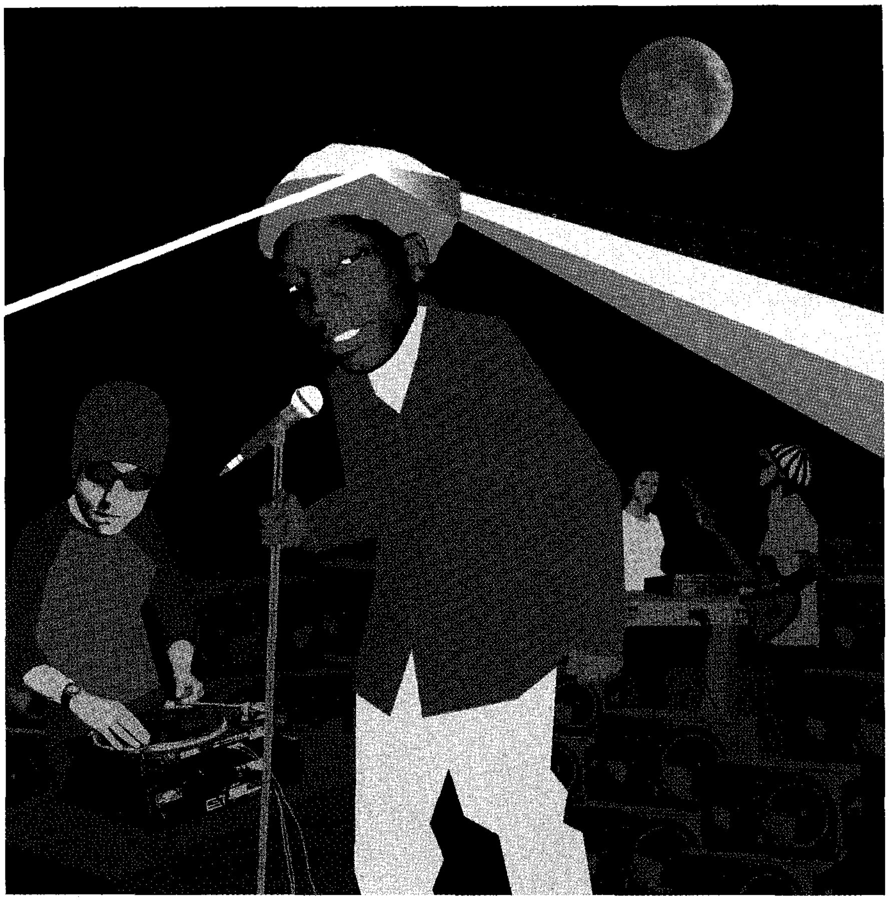
MUSEUMS AND LIBRARIES

METROPOLITAN MUSEUM
Fifth Ave. at 82nd St. (212-879-5500)—The Philip Guston retrospective preserves the shock of the major painter's late-career switch, around 1967, from a tremblingly sensitive abstract style to raucous cartooning: gregarious Ku Klux Klansmen, piled-up shoes and hairy legs, one-eyed heads like lima beans in need of a shave. It was a cultural departure as harshly significant as Bob Dylan's at the Newport Folk Festival in 1965. "I got sick and tired of all that purity," Guston said of his former compunctions. Many people hated the change, which put the artist's eloquent touch and color at the service of an abject vision. Who knew that late Guston would turn out to be the most influential American painting of the last quarter-century? Through Jan. 4. ♦ The tremendous El Greco retrospective celebrates art history's No. 1 troublemaker, the Cretan icon painter who got sophisticated in Venice and Rome and then, settling in Toledo in 1576, hit his stride as a pictorial mystic and rhapsode of the Counter-Reformation. His absolute originality—or weirdness, if you prefer—inspired Picasso and Pollock and still feels rawly new. The show emphasizes El Greco's more conventional, first-rate portraiture, but his vertiginous incarnations of ecclesiastical dogma are the main event. Their pictorial method (ascending figures elongate like blobs in a Lava lamp) suggests upside-down gravity. Through Jan. 11. ♦ **"Bravehearts: Men in Skirts"** looks at the many cultures in which men wear skirts and the various uniformly unsuccessful attempts of fashion designers to add the item to the wardrobes of the men in this culture. Through Feb. 8. ♦ In **"Treasures of a Lost Art: Italian Manuscript Painting of the Middle Ages and Renaissance,"** King David, enclosed in the round of a letter "Q" and wearing what appears to be red long johns, lifts his foot from a noose and raises his eyes to heaven. He is illustrating Psalm 24:15: "For He shall pluck my feet out of the snare." The show presents a hundred and one illuminated leaves, cuttings, and volumes, with a focus on introductory capitals like that "Q" from a fifteenth-century Veronese breviary. The draftsmanship isn't always perfect, but the color is, reminding us why Dante placed a Bolognese illustrator in the company of Giotto and Cimabue on the way to paradise. Through Feb. 1. ♦ When the French diorama artist Louis-Jacques-Mandé Daguerre invented a way to make one-of-a-kind photographs on silver-plated copper, the rage for daguerreotypes became so intense that five and a half tons of silver were used by Parisian platemakers in a single year. (The mania ended with the invention of photographic paper, in the mid-eighteen-fifties.) **"The Dawn of Photography: French Daguerreotypes, 1839-1855,"** an exhaustive and, at times, exhausting show, features a hundred and seventy-five works, from still-lifes to street scenes to portraits of well-known figures like Eugène Delacroix (looking maniacal) and Victor Hugo (looking crabby). Near the end of the show, a selection of female nudes is followed by a dog, a bull, a horse, and a prosthetic limb, as if to say that all subjects are equal before the camera's neutral gaze. Through Jan. 4. ♦ **"Dreams of Yellow Mountain: Landscapes of Survival in Seventeenth-Century China."** Through Jan. 25. ♦ In the twenties, Paul Klee (1879-1940) produced a series of chromatically and geometrically inventive abstractions that have come to be known as "magic squares." Culled from the Met's Berggruen Klee collection, this group of glowing grids is accompanied by a second body of work based on shimmering curtains of dots, kabbalistic symbols, and experiments with architectural motifs. Mixing gouache, printer's ink, and oil, the small pictures emit a full blast of the mischievous, synesthetically musical spiritualism that we've come to expect from this particular member of the modernist pantheon. Through Dec. 7.



The Easy Star All-Stars perform "Dub Side of the Moon," at S.O.B.'s.

JOHN RITTER

(Open Tuesdays through Sundays, 9:30 to 5:30, and Friday and Saturday evenings until 9.)

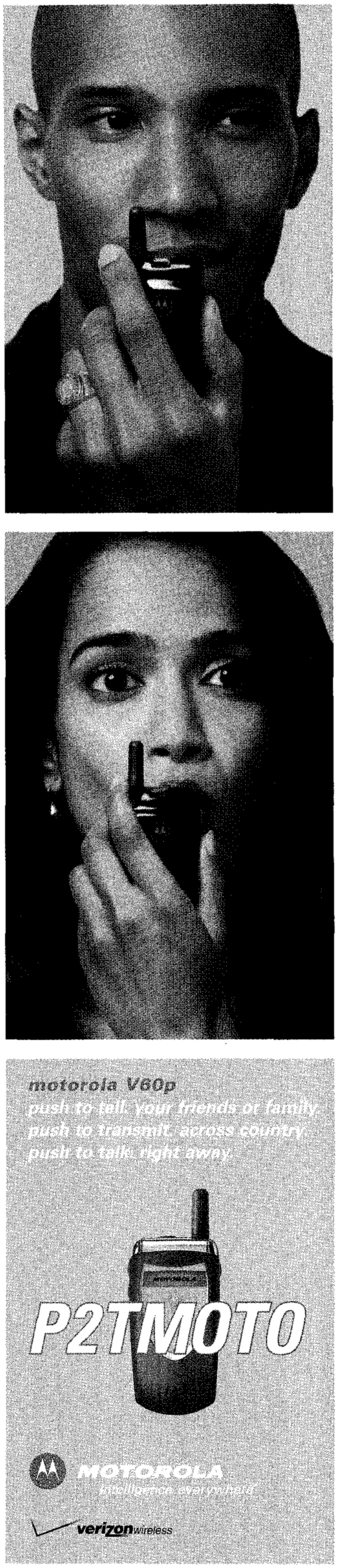
MUSEUM OF MODERN ART (MOMA QNS)
33rd St. at Queens Blvd., Long Island City (212-708-9400)—Liam Gillick's wall painted with intertwining bands of ochre, brown, and orange transforms the museum's entrance into a cross between a Scandinavian design center and a corporate lobby. The image suggests a magnified diagram of fibre-optic cable, which is fitting, since the project was originally conceived for a Norwegian telecommunications company. Near the ticket counter, a painted aluminum cube is suspended from the ceiling, lined with text from B. F. Skinner's "Walden Two." If the connection between the two works seems tangential, that's the point: distraction and diversion are central to Gillick's project, which sneaks his complex and subversive theories of post-utopian social space (you can find his articulate explanation of this in a museum brochure) into objects that have the polish and appeal of mass-produced design. Through Dec. 1. (Open Thursdays through Mondays, 10 to 5, and Friday evenings until 7:45.)

GUGGENHEIM MUSEUM
Fifth Ave. at 89th St. (212-423-3500)—**"James Rosenquist"** is a pinball machine of a retrospective, gracing the museum's ramp with two-dimensional equivalents of rackety lights and bumpers. The early Pop work, which uses billboard-painting technique to create surrealistic montages of slightly outdated magazine imagery, feels immortal. It nails a recurrent effect of modernity: the rolling blind spot of the recent past. Bigger, slicker later paintings succumb to mere razzmatazz. But Rosenquist earns blanket forgiveness on the strength of his classic "F-111" (1964-1965), a multi-panelled wraparound work, eighty-six feet long, that distills the madnesses of the nineteen-sixties with supple, violent majesty. Some people deem it the Great American Painting. Others have yet to look at it sufficiently. Through Jan. 25. (Open Saturdays through Wednesdays, 10 to 5:45, and Fridays, 10 to 8.)

WHITNEY MUSEUM OF AMERICAN ART
Madison Ave. at 75th St. (212-570-3676)—Two retrospectives, of the drawings of Arshile Gorky and the paintings of John Currin, through Feb. 15 and Feb. 22, respectively. ♦ At the end of Lothar Baumgarten's film **"The Origin of the Night,"** which seems to present ninety-eight minutes of the jungle in semi-darkness, a legend (in German) appears on the screen: "Shot in the forests of the Rhine, 1973-77." It isn't a surprise, exactly. The trancelike piece is filled with rippling waters, heavy green vines, and mighty trees, with a soundtrack of ambient chirps and croaks. But viewers also see rubber tires and discarded scraps of plastic interrupting the apparent rain-forest lushness; at one point airplanes go overhead. Baumgarten composed a faux Amazon in his own polluted back yard, turning an abjectly familiar vista exotic. Through Nov. 30. ♦ **"Beside the Rose: Selected Works by Jay De Feo."** Through Feb. 29. (Open Wednesdays through Thursdays, and weekends, 11 to 6, and Fridays, 1 to 9.)

BROOKLYN MUSEUM OF ART
Eastern Parkway (718-638-5000)—Contemporary Murrano Jews in Portugal celebrating holidays in hiding; Argentinean mothers of the disappeared; Purim masqueraders in China and Africa; large family groups from Ethiopia, Yemen, India, Venezuela, and Hong Kong; denizens of Birobidzhan, the Jewish Autonomous Region, established by Stalin in 1934; Jewish hawkers of Catholic souvenirs outside St. Peter's, where hereditary licenses go back to the eighteenth century; female rabbinical students in New York City; boys from the Hebrew Academy of Las Vegas—the Diaspora includes them all, and **"The Jewish Journey: Frédéric Brenner's Photographic Odyssey"** presents their portraits in crisply documentarian black-and-white. Through Jan. 11. (Open Wednesdays through Fridays, 10 to 5; Saturdays and Sundays, 11 to 6.)

NEW MUSEUM OF CONTEMPORARY ART ANNEX SPACE
391 Broadway (212-219-1222)—"Corporate art collection" doesn't quite conjure visions of



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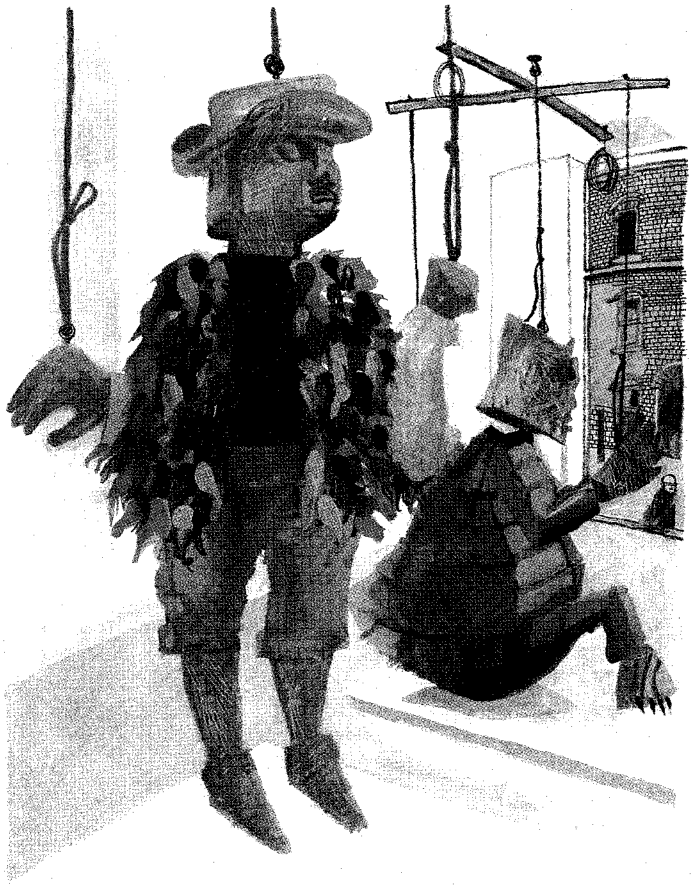
cutting-edge brilliance, but since its inception, in 1998, the Altoids Curiously Strong Collection has done an impressive job of acquiring work by smart young artists. (Altoids promised the collection, which includes pieces by Barnaby Furnas, Gregory Green, Rachel Harrison, and Julie Mehretu, to the New Museum in 2000.) A greatest-hits selection of works by its now famous alumni is on view, along with this year's acquisitions. New standouts include Patrick Jacobs's wall-mounted fish-eye lens, which peeps into a suggestive doll-house space, and Wayne White's bizarre alpine scene, which is overpainted with giant letters singing the praises of "Heinies N' Shooters w/Hotties at Hooters." Through Nov. 30. (Open Wednesdays through Sundays, noon to 7.)


"The Puppeteer," by Anne Chu, at 303 Gallery.

ANNABEL WRIGHT

GALLERIES–UPTOWN

Unless otherwise noted, galleries are open Tuesdays through Saturdays, from around 10 or 11 to between 5 and 6.

JOSEPH CORNELL
Cornell's popularity, like that of Frida Kahlo, can work against him. But even those who regard him as Miss Havisham with a hobby will be hard pressed to dismiss the dazzling works in this little show. To celebrate the artist's centennial, the gallery has borrowed twenty rarely seen shadow-box constructions from a private collection. Some are surprisingly minimal (an empty grid painted moon-white looks like a fugitive from an Arte Povera exhibition). But most contain the artist's trademark found objects—marbles, lunar maps, birds—in careful arrangements. Through Jan. 16. (Feigen, 34 E. 69th St. 212-628-0700.)

GABRIEL OROZCO
The apparently haphazard but poetically balanced assemblage (made from, say, dryer lint, or oranges) is a specialty for Orozco, though on occasion he also presents splashy, highly finished objects (like a Ping-Pong table with a built-in lily pond). His new show falls in between, with abstract sculptures made from lightweight expansion foam. The swooping, arclike shapes, poured and grafted together, suggest wings, bones, bombs, spaceships. A series of finished pieces suspended like mobiles from the ceiling are among the most beautiful things Orozco has made. Two other sets of less resolved and mostly floor-based pieces fail more often than one might wish. Still, the spirit of exuberant experiment flows throughout. Through Nov. 22. (Marian Goodman, 24 W. 57th St. 212-977-7160.)

Short List

JANET MALCOLM
Lori Bookstein Fine Art, 50 E. 78th St. 212-439-9605. Through Nov. 26.

RUTH MARTEN
Baumgold, 74 E. 79th St. 212-861-7338. Through Nov. 29.

GALLERIES–CHELSEA

ANNE CHU
Chu's thrown-together-looking, puppetlike figures in wire, fabric, and wood—tribal, medieval, or otherwise quaint in reference—are absurdly enchanting. You expect to find them twee, but you never get around to it. The vigor and surprise of the artist's hand—welding the wire armatures, sewing and embroidering the fabric, carving the wood with little chain saws—generate a mysterious urgency. The figures seem caught in a process of being imagined; they have a future in your thoughts. Presiding high on one wall, a black bronze raven that retains the soft look of its woody origins might, if it could, intone on the show's behalf, "Evermore." Through Dec. 20. (303 Gallery, 525 W. 22nd St. 212-255-1121.)

E. V. DAY
Spectacular sculptural installations, spotlighted or blacklighted in black rooms, by an artist who is known for being preoccupied with aeronautics and underwear. Here intimate apparel joins monofilament and eggs in hanging, stalactitic masses of wet-looking glass and fibreglass, with stalagmitic masses on the floor beneath them. Off by itself in a darkened room, the suspended shape of a stealth fighter plane, about nine feet long, is traced in fluorescent-green monofilament. It's so lovely that one forgets to feel menaced. Through Dec. 20. (Urbach, 526 W. 26th St. 212-627-0974.)

RAOUL DE KEYSER
This septuagenarian Belgian artist could be painting's answer to Richard Tuttle, given his fascination with the poetry of mysterious forms and his deceptively humble approach. Indeterminate shapes (loosely based on scraps of linoleum salvaged by the artist in his studio) hover over shimmering grounds, at times suggesting the jagged shards of Clyfford Still superimposed on a luminous field by Rothko. Through Dec. 6. (Zwirner, 525 W. 19th St. 212-727-2070.)

SHIRAZEH HOUSHIARY
The London-based Iranian paints whispery, near-monochrome abstractions in off-whites and grays that aim to induce meditative states. Her techniques include exposing the weave of the canvas and applying patterns of tiny graphite marks, and the effect is both subtle and pushy, like Vija Celmins gone large-scale and evangelical. A four-monitor video installation, "Breath," presents animated clouds of pale glitterings that wax and wane in time to vocalized religious texts in different languages. Can one enjoy the show without buying into the artist's afflatus? Not really. This art requires the loan of your soul. Through Dec. 20. (Lehmann Maupin, 540 W. 26th St. 212-255-2923.)

JOHN WESLEY
The cartoon painter, now seventy-five years old, uncovers new enigmatic whimsies in his dead-flat manner. Some feature Utamaro geishas and Dagwood Bumstead: Dagwood naps on his couch while a bare-breasted geisha performs ablutions, or a straitjacketed Dagwood yells when a geisha spills a drop from her drinking bowl. In another picture, a girl blows to dry polish on the nails of three (count 'em) feet. Outlines are crisp and colors equable, as always with Wesley. His improbable blend of surrealism and minimalism remains refractory in contemporary art—an uninvited guest who is, at times, the life of the party. Through Dec. 13. (Fredericks Freiser, 504 W. 22nd St. 212-633-6555.)

"FAST FORWARD: TWENTY YEARS OF WHITE ROOMS"
In 1983, the artist-run gallery White Columns opened a space, White Rooms, which showcases artists not represented by a commercial dealer. "Fast Forward" surveys the work of twelve artists who have been shown there, including some who went on to stardom (John Currin and Glenn Ligon, for example). All of the artists are represented by a recent work and one from their first exhibition. It bodes well for the next twenty years that the new piece by the most recent alum—Lisa Sigal's macho-delicate installation of wallboard, joint compound, and ethereal patches of color—merits best in show. Through Dec. 7. (White Columns, 320 W. 13th St. 212-924-4212.)

Short List

NANCY SPERO
Galerie Lelong, 528 W. 26th St. 212-315-0470. Through Dec. 6.

GALLERIES–DOWNTOWN

MATTHEW BUCKINGHAM
Transposing a scenario from Edgar Allan Poe, Buckingham's 16-mm. film "A Man of the Crowd" follows a young man who inexplicably but assiduously tracks another, older fellow through the streets of Vienna. The gallery installation is a devilishly simple affair. The film is projected through a hole in the wall and then on a mirror—making the echoes and doublings literal. Through Dec. 20. (Murray Guy, 453 W. 17th St. 212-463-7372.)

MARK LOMBARDI
Integrate corporate flowcharts with notes scribbled on a napkin by a private eye and you might approximate the drawings of Lombardi, a conceptual artist who was poised for stardom when he committed suicide, in 2000. He worked with the details of scandals like the collapse of the Bank of Credit and Commerce International (B.C.C.I.) and the vagaries of George W. Bush's Harken Energy company, creating elaborate pencil-on-paper diagrams that are delicately calibrated retinal delights. Through Dec. 18. (The Drawing Center, 35 Wooster St. 212-219-2166.)

Short List

VITO ACCONCI
Schachter/Rove, 132 Perry St. 212-807-6669. Through Dec. 14.

RICHARD MERKIN
Wickiser, 568 Broadway. 212-941-1817. Through Nov. 29.

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GALLERIES—BROOKLYN

"MEMORY AND DISAPPEARANCE: RECENT THAI ART"
This group show features four artists. Manit Sriwanichpoom is represented by his "pink man," who sports a Liberace-style suit and is photographed standing forlornly in a variety of settings; Satoru Chayavichitslip imagines the anthrax virus as a honeycomb-like sculpture with skulls attached. Prapon Joe Kumjim best illustrates the exhibition's title with ersatz versions of his family's lost Super-8 home movies. Sutee Kunavichayanont's life-size inflatable white elephant lies on the floor like a graveyard trophy until visitors huff and puff and blow him up. Through Dec. 1. (Momenta Art, 72 Berry St. 718-218-8058.)

PHOTOGRAPHY

ROBERT ADAMS
The documentary value of Adams's austere black-and-white landscapes of the American West is usually somewhat overwhelmed by their artistry and technical precision. His documentary side is more apparent in the fifty-two vintage silver prints in "No Small Journeys: Across Shopping Center Parking Lots, Down City Streets," pictures taken between 1979 and 1982 in a Denver suburb, near the Rocky Flats nuclear-weapons plant. They seem offhand, even random, but patterns emerge: mothers lugging their toddlers dot the asphalt landscape like trees, and everyone wears an expression halfway between weariness and resignation. The images of men striding purposefully down sidewalks in the unsparing late-afternoon light bring to mind, surprisingly, Philip-Lorca diCorcia's portraits of pedestrians lost in cityscapes. Through Dec. 20. (Marks, 523 W. 24th St. 212-243-0200.)

LEN JENSHEL / DIANE COOK
Spectacular and witty scenes from aquariums, taken by a husband-and-wife team. Jenshel's bright color pictures are best when they capture the fantasy and absurdity inherent in the aquarium experience. In one, a wan blonde in a shimmery mermaid costume skids under the surface of improbably blue water; in another, a blandly dressed couple is reflected in the wall of a tank that is aglow with anemones and sea urchins. Cook's slightly furry, quietly mysterious black-and-white photographs focus on the sea creatures in their unnatural environments—goggle-eyed flounders, as still and gray and startling as a bas-relief; a shark, its head craning toward the surface; and, best of all, in a three-panel image, a fleet of jellyfish who seem to plummet through the water's silvery depths like parachutes. Through Dec. 20. (Klotz/Sirmon, 511 W. 25th St. 212-741-4764.)

NIKKI S. LEE
Lee is nominally the photographer of her work, although the pictures are taken by an assistant, since Lee is also the subject, and it's hard to be in two places at once. In earlier projects, she assumed the identity of a senior citizen, an East Village punk, a lesbian, a Latina homegirl, and a dark-skinned hip-hop diva. For her new large-scale color prints Lee staged quiet scenes in which she does things like ride in the back of a taxi, visit an aquarium, and stand on a rock overlooking a wooded vista. She chopped the prints in half, eliminating her companions, traces of whom remain in disembodied hands or fragments of a leg or a tattooed and bandaged arm. Through Dec. 20. (Tonkonow, 535 W. 22nd St. 212-255-8450.)

ART SINSABAUGH
Sinsabaugh, who died in 1983, at the age of fifty-nine, hasn't had a solo show for nearly twenty years. Thirty-eight of his landscapes are gathered here, including several trademark panoramas of Midwestern farmland, made with a large-format camera. Sinsabaugh studied under, then taught alongside, Lázló Moholy-Nagy and Harry Callahan at Chicago's Institute of Design—the "New Bauhaus"—in the forties and fifties. He fell for the "banquet camera," which used twelve-by-twenty-inch film, and created some of the most detailed images since the demise of the daguerreotype. In one landscape, from 1962, a barn overlooks a cemetery rendered so clearly that you can read the names on the gravestones. Through Dec. 13. (Greenberg, 41 E. 57th St. 212-334-0010.)

Short List

JAMES CASABERE
Kelly, 528 W. 29th St. 212-239-1181.
Through Dec. 6.

TOM HUNTER
Yancey Richardson, 535 W. 22nd St.
646-230-9610. Through Nov. 29.

BILL JACOBSON
Saul, 535 W. 22nd St. 212-627-2410.
Through Nov. 29.

WOLFGANG TILLMANS
Rosen, 525 W. 24th St. 212-255-8450.
Through Dec. 20.

AUCTIONS AND ANTIQUES

SOTHEBY'S
Nov. 19 at 7 and Nov. 20 at 10:15 A.M.: When Jackson Pollock spoke of "the greatest painting in North America," he had in mind a fresco from 1930 by the Mexican muralist José Clemente Orozco (whom Pollock liked to call "the real man"). Orozco's "Prometheus" (a later work based on that fresco), like so many pieces in this auction of Latin-American art work, exemplifies the rich conversation that Latin-American painters and sculptors have maintained with the rest of the world. Wifredo Lam's nineteen-fifties Afro-Cuban Cubism, for instance, was admired (and influenced) by Picasso, while the Mexican artist Betsabeé Romero's "Autoconstruido," a Volkswagen built like a shantytown hovel, speaks to North American Pop art with a pronounced regional accent. ♦ Nov. 22 at 10 A.M. and 2: Wines from the Harter-family cellar. (York Ave. at 72nd St. 212-606-7000.)

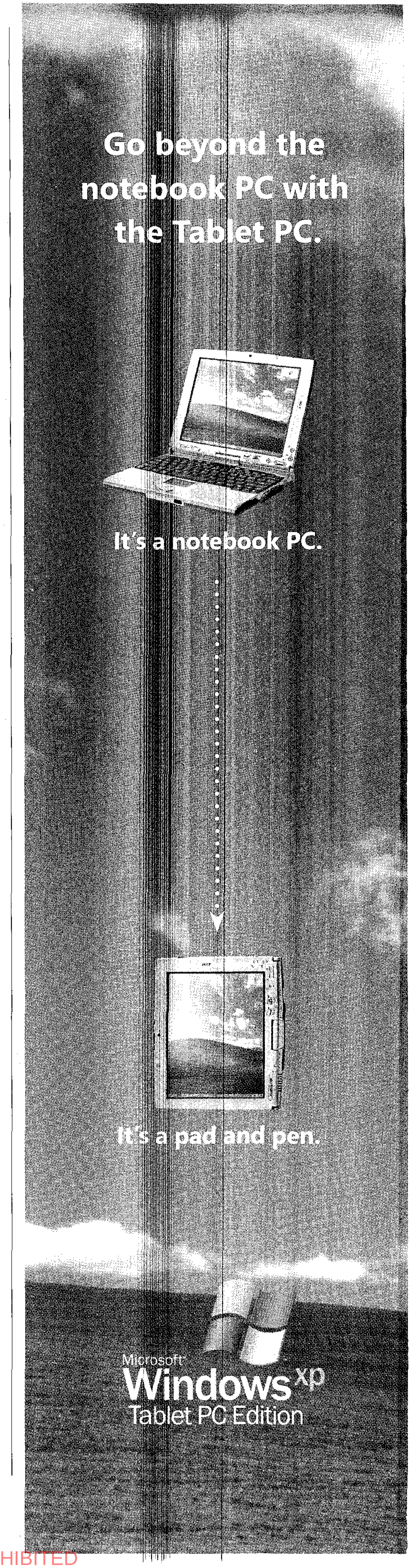
CHRISTIE'S
Nov. 19 at 10 A.M.: Latin-American art. ♦ Nov. 25 at 10 A.M. and 2: The late naturalist and adventurer Russell B. Aitken lived among the Ojibwe Indians in northern Canada and wandered across the African continent, but this auction will concentrate on the tamer side of his interests: eighteenth- and nineteenth-century European furniture, sculpture, and decorative arts from his Newport summer mansion, Champ Soleil, and from his New York studio apartment. (20 Rockefeller Plaza, at 49th St. 212-636-2000.)

SWANN
Nov. 20 at 10:30 A.M.: The conjunction of art and verse can make for a powerful aesthetic experience, one well represented in this sale of art, press, and illustrated books that includes a "Divine Comedy" illustrated with a hundred color woodcuts by Salvador Dali and a folio of three poems by the Mexican poet Octavio Paz accompanied by lithographs by Robert Motherwell. ♦ Nov. 21 at 10:30 A.M.: Contemporary prints, drawings, and mixed-media works by such artists as Twombly, Johns, and Rauschenberg. (104 E. 25th St. 212-254-4710.)

CONNOISSEUR'S ANTIQUES FAIR
Bibelots, furniture, paintings, and prints are to be found among the wares of fifty-one dealers, in styles ranging from medieval French and Native American to Heian-period Japanese. (69th Regiment Armory, Lexington Ave. at 25th St. 212-532-1516. Nov. 20-23.)

CLASSICAL MUSIC
OPERA

METROPOLITAN OPERA
"Le Nozze di Figaro," with Hei-Kyung Hong, Dorothea Röschmann, Magdalena Kožená (in her début), Dwayne Croft, Ferruccio Furlanetto, Gregg



Fedderly (another début), and Kurt Moll; James Levine conducts. (Nov. 19 at 7:30 and Nov. 22 at 1:30.) ♦ Halévy's **"La Juive,"** with Soile Isokoski, Neil Shicoff, Elizabeth Futral, Eric Cutler, and Ferruccio Furlanetto; Marcello Viotti. (Nov. 20 at 8.) ♦ Herbert Wernicke's magical 2001 production of Strauss and Hofmannsthal's **"Die Frau Ohne Schatten,"** a grandiose fairy-tale opera about fertility, fate, and the responsibilities of marriage, has returned with its original star, Deborah Voigt, whose sumptuous singing overcomes the opera's absurd dramaturgy. Deborah Polaski is the Dyer's Wife, Julia Juon is the Nurse, and John Horton Murray and Wolfgang Brendel are the heroically hapless men in their lives; Philippe Auguin. (Nov. 21 and Nov. 24 at 7:30.) ♦ **"La Bohème,"** with Elena Evseeva, Emily Pulley, Aquiles Machado, and Mariusz Kwiecien; Daniel Oren. (Nov. 22 at 8 and Nov. 25 at 7:30.) (Metropolitan Opera House. 212-362-6000.)

NEW YORK CITY OPERA
"Don Pasquale," with Angela Turner Wilson, Bruce Sledge, Michael Chioldi, and Peter Strummer (in the title role); George Manahan conducts. (Nov. 19 at 7:30 and Nov. 22 at 1:30.) ♦ City Opera's longtime production of **"Turandot"** manages to provide abundant spectacle without a lot of expensive clutter to upstage its excellent cast, which features Patricia Stevens (as Turandot), Oksana Krovytska (as Liù), Philip Webb (as Calaf), and Seth Malkin (as Timur); Manahan. (Nov. 20 at 7:30 and Nov. 23 at 1:30.) ♦ Jonathan Miller's rollicking production of **"The Mikado,"** featuring Tonna Miller, Kathryn Cowdrick, William Ferguson, Richard Suart, and Jan Opalach; Gerald Steichen. (Nov. 18 at 7:30 and Nov. 21-22 at 8.) (New York State Theatre. 212-870-5570. These are the final performances of the company's fall season.)

TEATRO GRATTACIELO
This small company devotes its annual performance to reviving the half-forgotten operas by the little masters of verismo. Its latest production, **"Guglielmo Ratcliff,"** may be its most daring rescue mission yet. Critics have not been kind to the work, which would have been Mascagni's first completed opera had not the writing of "Cavalleria Rusticana"—and the subsequent fame it brought—got in the way. But the piece, a blood-drenched love story set in the Scottish Highlands, does feature a number of inspired melodies, which in Grattacielo's concert performance will be sung by a cast led by the tenor Lando Bartolini; Alfredo Silipigni conducts. (Alice Tully Hall. 212-721-6500. Nov. 25 at 8.)

ORCHESTRAS AND CHORUSES

NEW YORK PHILHARMONIC
Gianandrea Noseda, the principal guest conductor of St. Petersburg's Mariinsky Theatre (where Valery Gergiev rules the roost), makes his Philharmonic début with a program that nicely joins his present with his past. Prokofiev's rarely performed Third Symphony is preceded by Shostakovich's Cello Concerto No. 1 (with Truls Mørk) and Stravinsky's "Monumentum pro Gesualdo di Venosa," the Russian composer's Apollonian tribute to his Dionysian forebear. (Nov. 19-20 at 7:30 and Nov. 21 at 2.) ♦ Roberto Minczuk, the Philharmonic's associate conductor, makes his subscription début with a program of Ligeti, Wagner, Mozart (the Horn Concerto No. 4, with the redoubtable Philip Myers), and Brahms (the Third Symphony). (Nov. 22 at 8 and Nov. 25 at 7:30.) (Avery Fisher Hall. 212-875-5656.)

ORCHESTRE DE PARIS
The orchestra of the city that once spurned the benighted Berlioz, music's ultimate Romantic, brings its bicentennial celebrations to New York in a pair of concerts conducted by Christoph Eschenbach. Nov. 20 at 8: A big program of excerpts from "Les Troyens" (with the mezzo-soprano Michelle DeYoung singing the roles of both Dido and Cassandra) and "Roméo et Juliette." ♦ Nov. 21 at 8: The Symphony No. 4 ("Italian"), by Mendelssohn-Bartholdy, the French composer's more conservative colleague, makes an appearance on an otherwise all-Berlioz program that celebrates his love of Italy: the tone poem/concerto "Harold in Italy" (with the violist Tabea Zimmerman) and the "Benvenuto Cellini" and "Roman Carnival" Overtures. (Carnegie Hall. 212-247-7800.)

AMERICAN SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA: "THE NEOCLASSICAL MIRROR"
Stravinsky's Violin Concerto (with Patricia Kopatchinkskaja as soloist) is the centerpiece of Leon Botstein's latest concert adventure with his versatile orchestra. The composer's rigorous yet nostalgic masterpiece is buttressed with works by two of the worthier minor figures (both Hungarian) of the interwar era: Leo Weiner's Concertino for Piano and Orchestra (with Dénes Varjon) and Dohányi's Symphony No. 2 in E Major. (Avery Fisher Hall. 212-875-5030. Nov. 21 at 8.)

NEW YORK COLLEGIUM: "THE DRESDEN VIRTUOSI"
Andrew Parrott's top-drawer period-instrument band (guest-directed by the oboist Stephen Hammer) reaches back to the world of eighteenth-century Dresden to highlight overtures and concertos by such composers as Fasch, Zelenka, and J. C. Bach. (Holy Trinity Lutheran Church, W. 65th St. at Central Park W. 212-717-9246. Nov. 21 at 8.)

GREGG SMITH SINGERS
The choral conductor Gregg Smith, who has devotedly supported American music for almost half a century, will be honored by the American Composers Alliance at his latest concert, a typically eclectic mix of Brahms, Beeson, Ives (his settings of Psalms 42 and 67), Rorem, and others. (St. Peter's Church, Lexington Ave. at 54th St. 914-376-8899. Nov. 22 at 8.)

RECITALS

AARON COPLAND WORKSHOP CONCERT
Michael Tilson Thomas, the conductor-pianist who, as Leonard Bernstein's prize pupil, can claim his place as a guardian of the "American sound," begins the first of two seasons of "Perspectives" concerts at Carnegie Hall with a workshop on the music of Copland. In the public concert that concludes the sessions, Thomas will be joined by the soprano Sonya Gabrielle Baker, the singers of Cantori New York, and other artists, performing excerpts from "Appalachian Spring" along with thornier works like the piano trio "Vitebsk" and the Piano Variations. (Zankel Hall, Carnegie Hall. 212-247-7800. Nov. 19 at 7:30.)

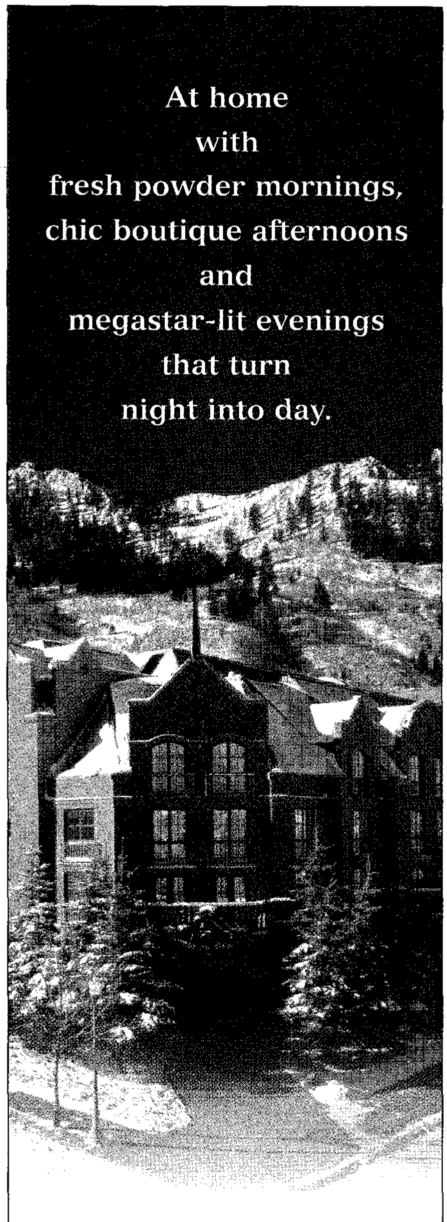
CHAMBER MUSIC SOCIETY OF LINCOLN CENTER: "DOUBLE EXPOSURE"
The Apollo Piano Trio (featuring the violinist Curtis Macomber) plays works by two jazz-influenced contemporary composers, Richard Festinger and David Schiff (best known, perhaps, for his writings on Elliott Carter), repeating the short program after an intermission reception. (Rose Studio, Lincoln Center. 212-875-5788. Nov. 20 at 6:45.)

COLLEAGUES IN CONCERT
A clutch of friends from the Met Orchestra gather for music by Schubert (including the String Quintet). (Lang Recital Hall, Hunter College, Park Ave. at 68th St. 212-772-4488. Nov. 20 at 7.)

STEPHEN HOUGH
The English pianist, renowned for his fleet and decorous style, offers a recital of Liszt ("Suisse," from "Années de Pèlerinage"), Hummel, and Chopin. (Zankel Hall, Carnegie Hall. 212-247-7800. Nov. 20 at 7:30.)

ALAN FEINBERG: "HAYDN RECONSIDERED"
Two great piano sonatas (Nos. 30 and 33) by the "composers' composer" par excellence form the pillars of Feinberg's Miller Theatre program, which also includes music by Schubert (the Impromptu in G-Flat Major) and by two contemporary composers, Judith Weir and Mauricio Kagel. (Columbia University, Broadway at 116th St. 212-854-7799. Nov. 20 at 8.)

WILLIAM FERGUSON
The young tenor, the winner of the 2003 Alice Tully Vocal Arts award, makes his début at Alice Tully Hall with songs by Schubert and Britten (the Thomas Hardy cycle "Winterwords"), as



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TABLES FOR TWO

SCHILLER'S LIQUOR BAR
131 Rivington St. (212-260-4555)—When Keith McNally, of Balthazar and Pastis, expanded his bistro empire to the Lower East Side, in August, the Zip Code got its first standing limo line. With tile walls, low pressed-tin ceilings, clouded mirrors, and marble-topped tables, Schiller's looks like a Parisian bar from the set of Baz Luhrmann's "La Bohème," and it draws a well-heeled crowd that slaps down platinum cards to pay modest prices for McNally's bistro-style fare.

The food arrives quickly. The watercress salad, confettied with pear shavings, walnuts, and blue cheese, is fresh and playful; the whole sliced avocado is voluptuous, drizzled in vinaigrette. The main dishes—such as steak frites, which comes with béarnaise sauce or au poivre, or the swordfish with lemon and mint—are well-seasoned outside, juicy inside. A dense, sticky toffee pudding comes drenched in warm caramel. In keeping with the delusion that the restaurant's guests are working-class bons viveurs, McNally serves wine in bottles labelled "Cheap," "Decent," and "Good."

Although the place seethes like Times Square on New Year's Eve, the wait staff doesn't drop the orders. One recent night, Max, a twenty-six-year-old waiter who went to Penn and looks like Montgomery Clift, discussed the clientele as he refilled a glass with "Decent" red wine. "Geraldo was here yesterday," he said. "And Martha comes here." Stewart? "Yeah." But he's not starstruck. "I like the regular customers," he said. "We get a lot of downtown girls with uptown guys in business shirts and jeans from five years ago."

The regular customers can be found at brunch, where the menu is both traditional and inventive: the Welsh rabbit, with a layer of Stilton covered in sharp cheddar, is served bubbling hot on a piece of chewy, sour brown toast and topped with a roasted tomato slice. And at brunch, unlike at dinner, they can get a table without having to wait for two hours. (Open weekdays for breakfast, lunch, and dinner, and weekends for brunch and dinner. Entrées $11-$22.)

—Liesl Schillinger

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well as music by another young Juilliard alumnus, Mason Bates. (212-721-6500. Nov. 20 at 8.)

MITSUKO UCHIDA AND FRIENDS
The pianist concludes her Carnegie Hall concerts of music from both the First and Second Viennese Schools, a repertory that she plays with uncommon lucidity and grace. Nov. 21 at 7:30: The tenor Ian Bostridge, the conductor Esa-Pekka Salonen, and other eminent musicians join Uchida for music by Webern, Berg (the Chamber Concerto), and Schumann. (Zankel Hall.) ♦ Nov. 24 at 8: Uchida goes it alone in Beethoven's last three piano sonatas. (Isaac Stern Auditorium.) (212-247-7800.)

KITCHEN HOUSE BLEND
The performance center's resident cross-cultural chamber band plays newly commissioned works by the avant-jazz pianist Vijay Iyer, the post-Hendrix guitar guru John King, and the electronica sound artist Marina Rosenfeld. (512 W. 19th St. 212-255-5793. Nov. 21-22 at 8.)

MUSIC FROM MARLBORO
The current cream of the crop from the summer chamber-music series (including the pianist Anna Polonsky and the violinist Timothy Fain) play works by Mozart, Ravel, and Schumann (the Piano Quinet). (Metropolitan Museum, Fifth Ave. at 82nd St. 212-570-3949. Nov. 21 at 8.)

MIRROR VISIONS ENSEMBLE
Tom Cipullo's "Secrets," a big new song cycle on poems by Linda Pastan, is the highlight of the vocal ensemble's latest concert, which also features songs by Richard Lalli and Christopher Berg. (Elebash Auditorium, CUNY Graduate Center, 365 Fifth Ave. 212-289-6720. Nov. 22 at 5.)

MAKING MUSIC: OLIVER KNUSSEN
Modernism's most lyrically astute practitioner is fêted with an evening of his chamber works, some of which (like "Songs Without Voices" and "Hums and Songs of Winnie the Pooh") are already acknowledged masterpieces. They are performed by a renowned group of Knussen fans that includes the soprano Lucy Shelton and the cellist Fred Sherry. (Weill Recital Hall, Carnegie Hall. 212-247-7800. Nov. 22 at 7:30.)

FRIENDS & ENEMIES OF NEW MUSIC
Gloria Cheng, a renowned new-music pianist, is the star in an evening of instrumental works by Carter (including "Night Fantasies"), Druckman, Harbison, and others. (Tenri Cultural Institute, 43A W. 13th St. Nov. 22 at 8. Tickets at the door.)

GARRICK OHLSSON
The pianist—a big guy whose clearheaded curiosity is matched with an effortless, athletic technique—combines the decadent creations of Scriabin (including "Flammes Sombres" and the Sonata No. 5) with relatively chaste works by Haydn, Handel, and Beethoven (the Sonata No. 32 in C Minor). (Avery Fisher Hall. 212-721-6500. Nov. 23 at 3.)

MUSIC BEFORE 1800:
"THE AMOROUS LYRE"
La Monica, a vibrant young early-music band from the West Coast, makes its New York début with a program of works by Monteverdi, Castello, Marini, and the little-known Tarquinio Merula, for whom its members share a special passion. (Corpus Christi Church, 529 W. 121st St. 212-666-9266. Nov. 23 at 4.)

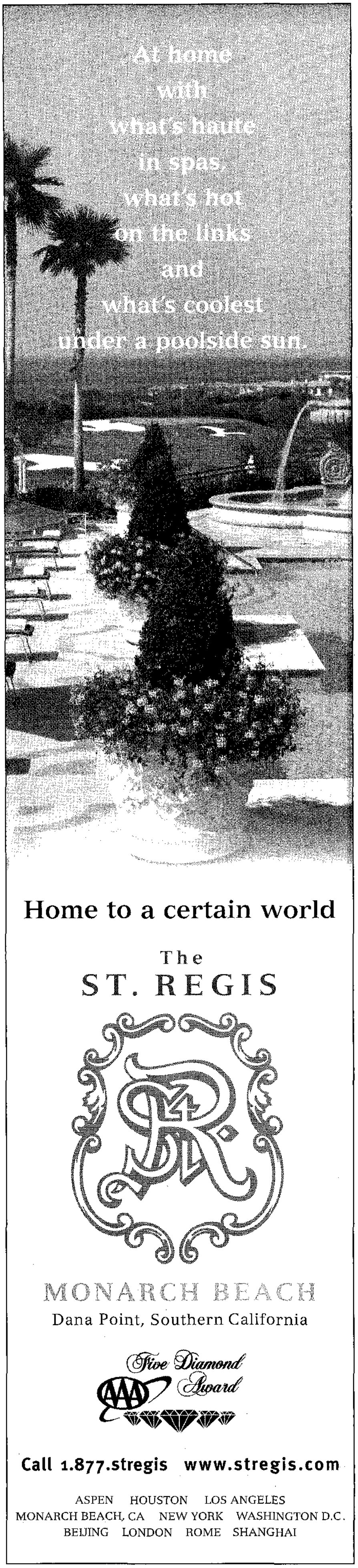
JUPITER SYMPHONY CHAMBER PLAYERS
The pianist Ilya Itin and the cellist Mark Kosower are featured in a program of Mozart, Mahler (the Piano Quartet), and Schubert (the Piano Trio No. 1, Op. 99). (Good Shepherd Presbyterian Church, 152 W. 66th St. 212-799-1259. Nov. 24 at 2 and 7:30.)

BO SKOVHUS AND ANDREAS HAEFLIGER
The dashing baritone and his accompanist offer a generous evening of Wolf (a bevy of Goethe and Eichendorff songs), Strauss, and Martin (the Six Monologues from "Jedermann") at Zankel Hall. (212-247-7800. Nov. 25 at 7:30.)

ABOVE AND BEYOND

READINGS
Nov. 19 at 8: Robert Creeley and Jennifer Moxley read from their poetry. (The Poetry Project, St. Mark's In-the-Bouwerie, Second Ave. at 10th St. Tickets at the door.) ♦ Nov. 20 at 6: Edith Grossman joins the poet Alastair Reid for a reading and discussion of her new translation of "Don Quixote." (Americas Society, Park Ave. at 68th St. 212-249-8950.) ♦ Nov. 24 at 8: Garrison Keillor and Calvin Trillin offer selections from their latest novels. (92nd Street Y, Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. 212-415-5500.)

TALKS
Nov. 19 at 6:30: The London-based architect Charles Jencks discusses "The Garden of Cosmic Speculation," his new book detailing the fascinating thirty-acre landscape he designed in Scotland with his late wife, Maggie Keswick. (Urban Center Books, 457 Madison Ave., between 50th and 51st Sts. 212-935-3592.) ♦ Nov. 20 at 6:30: The music critic and *New Yorker* writer Alex Ross interviews Esa-Pekka Salonen, the music director of the Los Angeles Philharmonic. (The Jewish Museum, Fifth Ave. at 92nd St. 212-423-3337.) ♦ Nov. 20 at 6:30: The South African novelist J. M. Coetzee, who recently received the Nobel Prize in Literature, offers a lecture titled "As a Woman Grows Older." (Celeste Bartos Forum, New York Public Library, Fifth Ave. at 42nd St. 212-930-0855.) ♦ Nov. 20 at 8: The entomologist May Berenbaum and the writers Oliver Sacks, Diane Ackerman, and Natalie Angier join the noted field biologist Thomas Eisner for a multimedia presentation celebrating his work and the publication of his magnum opus, "For the Love of Insects." (Angel Orensanz Foundation, 172 Norfolk St. Tickets at the door.)



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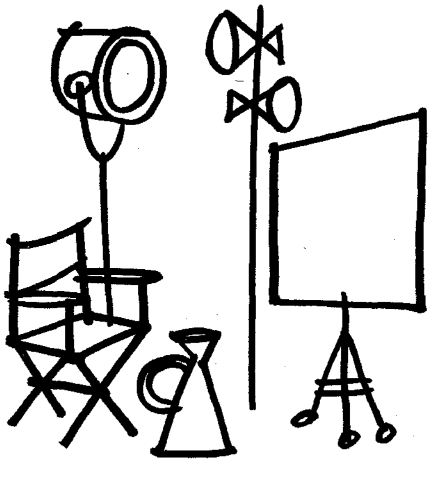
MOVIES OPENING



ACTS OF WORSHIP

A vérité drama about a young Manhattan drug addict. Directed by Rosemary Rodriguez. Opening Nov. 21. (Village East Cinemas.)

THE BARBARIAN INVASIONS

Reviewed this week in The Current Cinema. Opening Nov. 21. (Lincoln Plaza Cinemas and Sunshine Cinema.)

THE CAT IN THE HAT

Mike Myers plays the mischievous feline, in a live-action adaptation of the Dr. Seuss story. With Alec Baldwin, Kelly Preston, and Dakota Fanning. Directed by Bo Welch. Opening Nov. 21.

GOTHIKA

Mathieu Kassovitz directed this thriller, in which a criminal psychologist (Halle Berry) has no memory of a murder she may have committed. With Penélope Cruz and Robert Downey, Jr. Opening Nov. 21.

EL LEYTON

A drama set in a Chilean village about two fishermen who love the same woman. Gonzalo Justiniano directed. In Spanish. Opening Nov. 21. (Quad Cinema.)

21 GRAMS

Reviewed this week in The Current Cinema. Opening Nov. 21. (Chelsea Cinemas, Empire 25, Lincoln Square, New York Twin, and Village Theatre VII.)

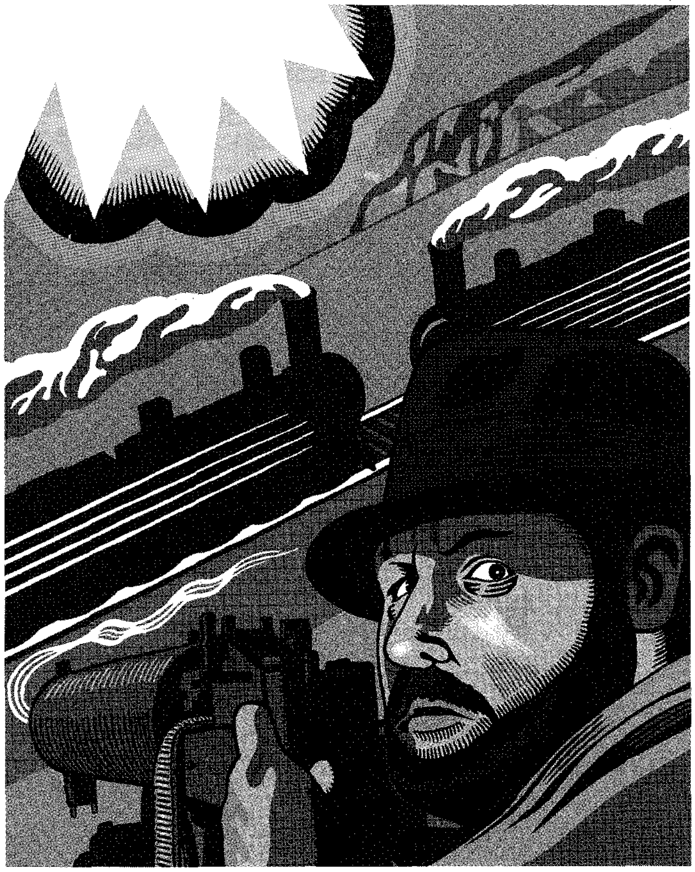
FILM NOTES

DRUNKEN ANGEL

Akira Kurosawa's savage and tender study of a brutal TB-riddled yakuza (Toshiro Mifune) and an idealistic, alcoholic doctor (Takashi Shimura) is distinctly Japanese but also absorbs Italian neorealism and American urban melodrama. Set around an unnatural body of water filled with debris, mosquitoes, and bubbling gas, it's a bristling, brawl-heavy account of survival in the slums of postwar Tokyo. The doctor increasingly identifies with his patient as a reflection of his own misspent youth; the gangster grudgingly realizes that he must change his thuggish ways. The movie's visceral and emotional power and the passion behind its eclectic elements (night-club riffs out of noirs, a nightmare out of Dreyer) transcend its repetitive, jagged structure. Shimura is the first of Kurosawa's great worriers, and Mifune's performance, which can seem overscaled, attains fierce beauty and clarity in a jaw-dropping sequence of violent redemption. Originally released in 1948. In Japanese.—*Michael Sragow* (Thalia Theatre; Nov. 22-23.)

DUCK, YOU SUCKER

The two leads, James Coburn and Rod Steiger, are a plus and a minus—like all the other major elements of this odd yet fascinating Sergio Leone spectacle. Coburn displays masterly ease in the role of a fugitive I.R.A. dynamiter who blows things up for Pancho Villa's revolution. His sardonic presence helps cushion Steiger's excesses as a lusty Mexican bandit who becomes a peasant hero by mistake. The first section boasts a breezy brand of shock that resembles postapocalyptic sci-fi. Steiger and his gang waylay a deluxe stagecoach and attack an insulting, sexually frustrated noblewoman; Coburn announces himself with an explosion and putters into the film out of nowhere, on a motorbike. Between patches of pulp-Shavian debate, the rest of the movie has the lyric recklessness about violent men and their haunted pasts that would flower a dozen years later in Leone's "Once Upon a Time in America." Originally released in 1972. This version features twenty minutes of restored scenes.—*M.S.* (Film Forum; Nov. 21-25.)



At Film Forum, Rod Steiger in "Duck, You Sucker."

MICHAEL KUPPERMAN

ELEPHANT

Gus Van Sant's fascinating, mysterious, semidocumentary meditation on the Columbine massacre is not very satisfying, but it's still something to see. Van Sant and his cameraman, Harris Savides, gently but persistently pad after one student and then another at a nameless school, photographing casual encounters from various points of view. The multiple versions of the same trivial event suggest the utter contingency of the disaster: one teen-ager turns in a certain direction and avoids the killers, two others do not. For Van Sant, what matters is the dailiness of school social life—gossip, flirtations, hazing—in which time and sequence count less than states of being. He punctuates the banal school scenes with beautiful shots of scudding clouds and a darkening sky, as if all of eternity were contained in a passing moment when children die.—*David Denby* (Reviewed in our issue of 10/27/03.) (Angelika Film Center, BAM Rose Cinemas, and Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)

HIGH PLAINS DRIFTER

As filmmaker and star, Clint Eastwood, in this mind-fogging 1973 Western, exploits the combination of deadpan directorial perspective and pseudo-atmospheric visuals that in future years would cause many of his rudderless ships to be hailed as vehicles of discovery. In the title role, Eastwood enters a remote mining town and within minutes rapes a woman and kills off three gunslingers. The latter act, at least, makes him just the fellow the townsfolk think they need to protect them from the vengeance of another deadly trio; what emerges, partly through ghostly flashbacks, is a tale of corruption and cowardice on the part of almost everybody. Eastwood fills out the story with such a high level of oddity (the drifter appoints a dwarf as sheriff and mayor) and abstraction (he ultimately renames the town Hell) that it begs to be taken as a parable. But of what? Maybe the shaky underpinnings of frontier industry, or perhaps just big thudding concepts like Fate.—*M.S.* (BAM Rose Cinemas; Nov. 24.)

THE HUMAN STAIN

Robert Benton, the maker of such muted films as "Nobody's Fool," has now turned his attention to the somewhat louder material of Philip Roth, whose infuriated tale of love in the age of Kenneth Starr was published in 2000. Anthony Hopkins is Coleman Silk, born black, but pale of skin, who, with smarting irony, is hounded from his post as a professor of classics for an allegedly racist remark. His lover, who sweeps floors and milks cows for a living, is played by Nicole Kidman, whose bearing, unfortunately for Benton, becomes more aristocratic with every passing film. The miscasting is completed by Gary Sinise, who takes the part of Nathan Zuckerman, one of Roth's roster of stand-ins. The result is calm, wintry, and plaintive—in other words, a world away from the novel. That is no crime, but Benton's decorous approach leaves the movie floundering in implausibilities. With Wentworth Miller as the younger (and more compelling) Silk.—*Anthony Lane* (11/3/03) (Chelsea Cinemas, Cinema 2, Empire 25, Lincoln Square, and Union Square.)

INTOLERABLE CRUELTY

Waggling his eyebrows and smiling broadly, George Clooney does some of his most self-confident acting yet as a sharp Los Angeles divorce lawyer, and Catherine Zeta-Jones is suitably deadpan as a voracious beauty who marries wealthy men and then finds spurious reasons to dump them and take their money. As these two lock horns, this Coen-brothers movie seems, for a while, to be the kind of glossy, high-style dialogue comedy from the forties that both celebrated and satirized heartless people with a gift for gab. But then the Coens fall into their usual goony-bird comedy games, and, though some of the jokes are funny, they are funny at a much lower level. Geoffrey Rush has a good bit at the beginning as a Hollywood sleaze who likes to sing along with his car radio.—*D.D.* (Empire 25, First & 62nd Cinemas, Orpheum VII, and Union Square.)

KILL BILL—VOL. 1

In this Quentin Tarantino fantasy pastiche of samurai and martial-arts films, the trunk of a body, its head lopped off, will spurt blood like a fountain. We know that the non-stop violence is not meant to be real: for starters, the blood looks like cranberry juice. Yet Tarantino is working in a photographic medium, and the real-world associations are not so easy to shrug off. Tarantino's heroine, Uma Thurman, kills another female warrior in front of the woman's

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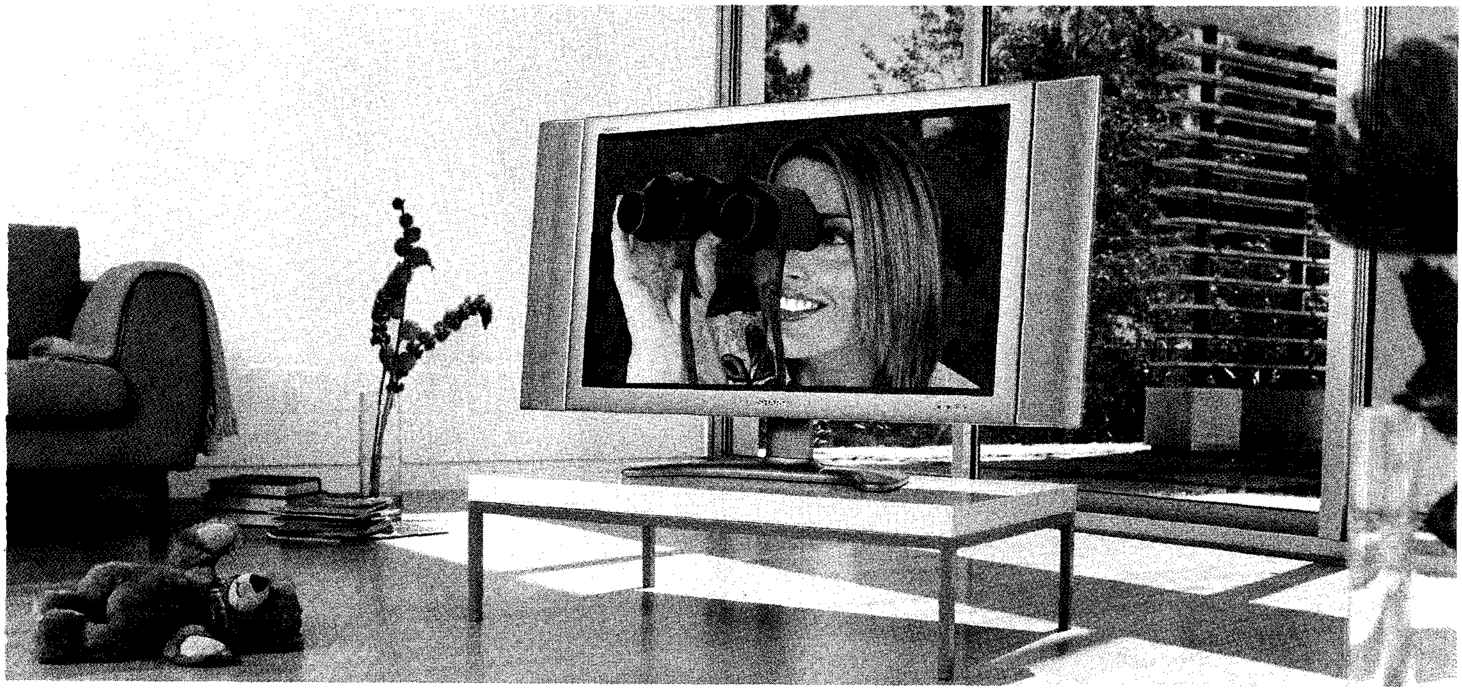

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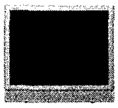

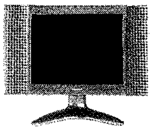

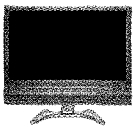

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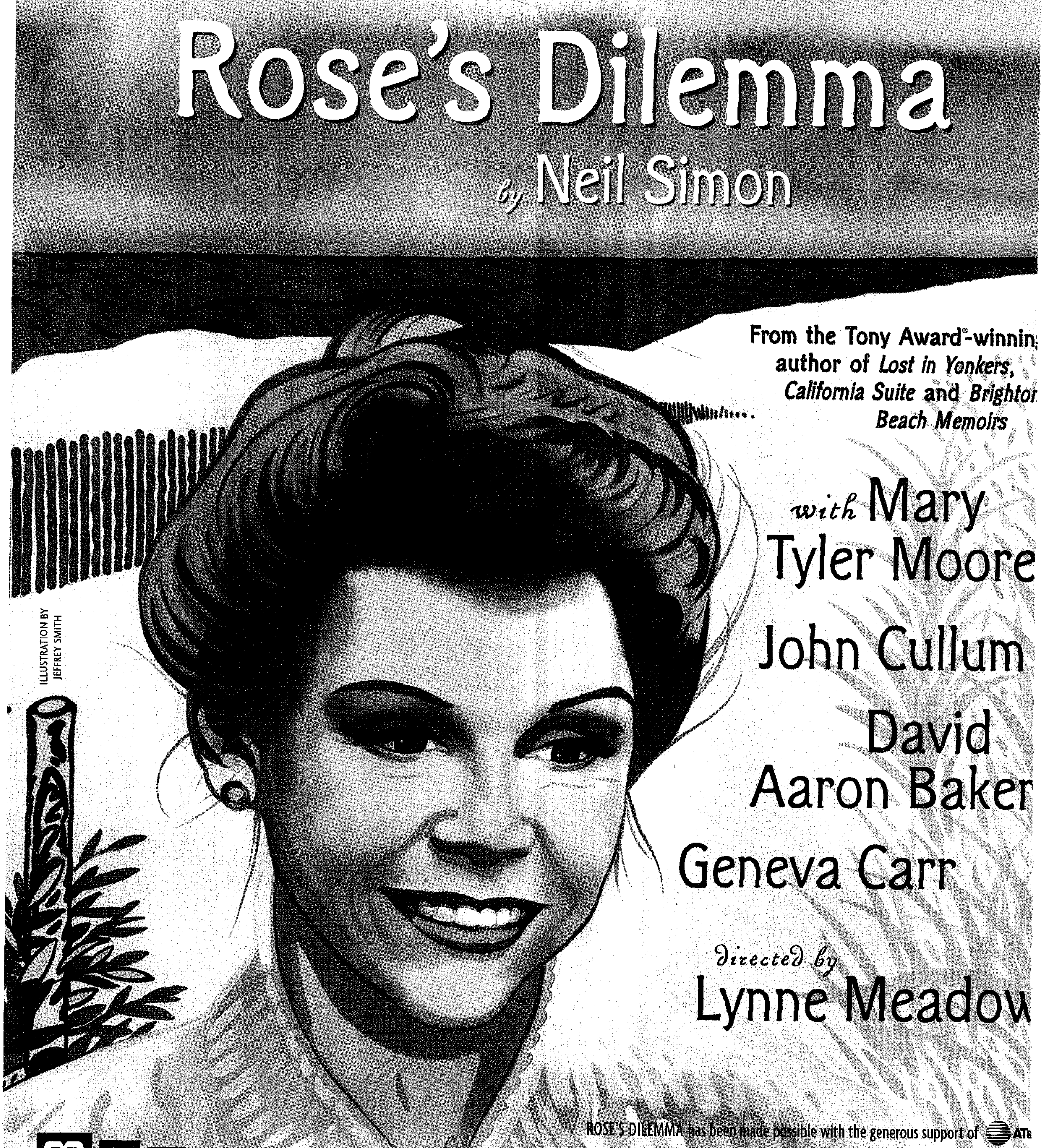

Rose's Dilemma

by Neil Simon

From the Tony Award®-winnin
author of *Lost in Yonkers,*
California Suite and *Brighto*
Beach Memoirs

with Mary Tyler Moore

John Cullum

David Aaron Baker

Geneva Carr

directed by
Lynne Meado

ILLUSTRATION BY JEFFREY SMITH

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little girl, and the child doesn't react. Tarantino wants the shock of a mother killed in front of her daughter without the audience undergoing any discomfort at all. The movie is what's formally known as decadence and commonly known as crap. Saying that it's an homage to long-established genres in Hong Kong doesn't reduce its pop-nihilistic stupidity. Some of the sequences have a scintillating visual flair, but you come out feeling nothing at all. And this is only the first half.—*D.D.* (10/13/03) (Battery Park 16, 42nd Street E Walk, Kips Bay Theatre, Lincoln Square, 19th Street East 6, Orpheum VII, Sutton 1 and 2, 34th Street Theatre, and Village Theatre VII.)

LOONEY TUNES: BACK IN ACTION

Don't worry, it's much better than "Space Jam." Joe Dante, a big fan of Chuck Jones and all things Looney, directed this silly adventure that properly places Bugs and Daffy at center stage. For the grownups, he's packed the film with inside jokes that pay homage not just to Warner Bros. cartoons (Speedy Gonzales, alas, is having trouble finding work in these politically correct times) but to all of movie history. For the kids, there's plenty of good old-fashioned mugging and make-believe violence. The human actors, led by Brendan Fraser, blend in well with their animated co-stars, although there's still that nagging problem of eye contact. More troublesome is the pacing: Dante packs the movie with enough clamorous action to tax even the most hyper ten-year-old. Still, a few sequences—like a chase through the paintings at the Louvre—display a surreal creativity worthy of Master Jones himself.—*Michael Agger* (Battery Park 16, East 86th Street Cinemas, Empire 25, Kips Bay Theatre, Lincoln Square, New York Twin, 34th Street Theatre, and Village East Cinemas.)

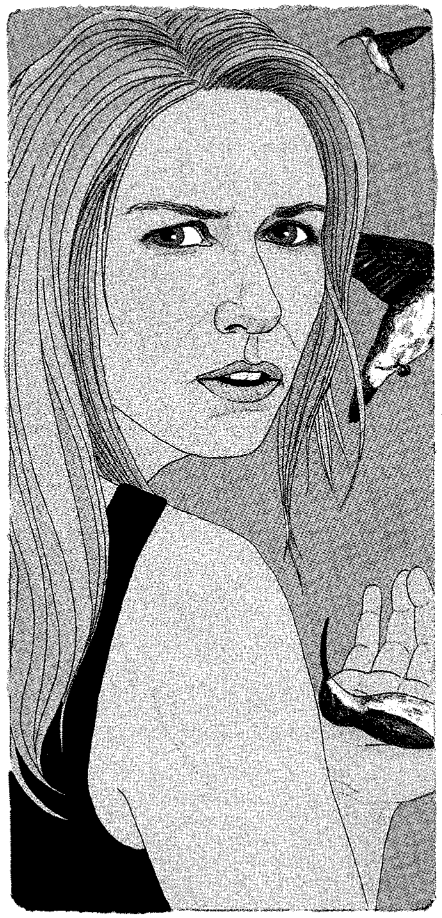
MASTER AND COMMANDER: THE FAR SIDE OF THE WORLD

Finally, the work of Patrick O'Brian arrives onscreen. Two of his twenty Jack Aubrey novels have been requisitioned for this new Peter Weir film; instead of receiving a gentle introduction, we are launched straight into a fogbound firefight, and from there into a race around Cape Horn. The casting of Russell Crowe as Aubrey will divide the fans; he can handle the sway of action with aplomb, but O'Brian readers may flinch at his sullen air and pine for the bluffness of the original. Paul Bettany does a delicate job with the role of Stephen Maturin, Jack's best and cleverest friend; we sense his quiet eagerness—common to the work of Weir and O'Brian—to press on toward the darker reaches of the world and discover more. For all the foul weather, and despite the charming amputation scene, we feel ourselves to be in good company with these men, and strangely jealous of their packed and salted lives.—*A.L.* (11/17/03) (Battery Park 16, Chelsea Cinemas, East 85th Street, 84th Street Sixplex, Empire 25, Kips Bay Theatre, Metro Twin, 64th and 2nd, 34th Street Theatre, Union Square, and Ziegfeld.)

THE MATRIX REVOLUTIONS

In the final installment of the "Matrix" trilogy, the directors Larry and Andy Wachowski have made the intricacies of the original movie (the play between actual and simulated reality) secondary to the main events of spectacle, fighting, and stunningly wooden dialogue. At its best, the picture is violently exciting; at its worst, banal and monotonous. More than ever, the plot's conventional science-fiction elements (man vs. machine) are in the foreground. The movie may best be described as an enormously sophisticated version of the 1953 George Pal classic, "The War of the Worlds." Serious fans—call them Matricians—will spend hours debating the apocalypse as revealed by the Brothers Wachowski. But if you ignore the wilder speculative meanings inspired by the series, there remains a halfway palpable idea: in a period in which gigantic corporations and entire governments devote themselves to promoting made-up realities, people may genuinely wonder what world they are living in. With Keanu Reeves, Hugo Weaving, Carrie-Anne Moss, Laurence Fishburne, Jada Pinkett Smith, and Cornel West.—*D.D.* (11/10/03) (Astor Plaza, Battery Park 16, Chelsea West, Cinema 1, 84th Street Sixplex, 42nd Street E Walk, Kips Bay Theatre, Lincoln Square, Metro Twin, Orpheum VII, 34th Street Theatre, and Union Square.)

LARA TOMLIN



Naomi Watts in "21 Grams."

MY ARCHITECT

A traditional quest, superbly told. Nathaniel Kahn seeks to understand the life of his father, the architect Louis I. Kahn, a task made even more difficult by the fact that Kahn had three separate and coexisting families: a wife and two mistresses with one child apiece. For his part, Nathaniel was an illegitimate son and only eleven when his father died; his interviews are laced with raw, uncut feeling for a man he never really knew. Throughout the documentary, he uses Kahn's buildings (beautifully photographed) as a kind of wedge into his father's motivations and personality. He discovers that Kahn's more famous contemporaries, like I. M. Pei, appear haunted by his career: is it better to have designed three or four unexampled buildings, as Kahn did, or to have had a successful, high-profile architectural practice? Perhaps more surprisingly, the women in Kahn's life don't regret the way he treated them. Anne Tyng, Kahn's co-worker and mistress, explains her affection this way: "The ideas that you work on together connect you always somehow." In the end, Nathaniel's homage to his father demonstrates what it was like to be caught in his creative whirlwind.—*M.A.* (Film Forum.)

MYSTIC RIVER

Clint Eastwood's sombre masterpiece, from a novel by Dennis Lehane (Brian Helgeland did the adaptation), is about a working-class Catholic community in Boston held in thrall by an old crime. Back in the seventies, one of three eleven-year-old boys who were close friends was taken away by two men pretending to be cops and sexually assaulted for days before he finally escaped. But it turns out that Dave (Tim Robbins) never escaped at all. Twenty-five years later, he is still shrouded in dreams and terror, and his two friends, Sean (Kevin Bacon), a homicide detective, and Jimmy (Sean Penn), an ex-con who runs a corner grocery, still feel the shame of not helping him. When Jimmy's nineteen-year-old daughter is murdered, the three are uneasily brought back together again. The movie's feeling for the neighborhood milieu is so convincing because there's no distinction between background and foreground—everything we see (faces, living rooms, back yards, weather, battered old cars) is dramatically relevant. Eastwood directs in a gray, end-of-day light and with a minimum of camera rhetoric; he lets the script and the actors do the work. Penn does a few semi-psychotic soliloquies in which he takes off into the stratosphere, joining Marlon Brando as one of the great tragic actors of the screen.—*D.D.* (10/13/03) (Battery Park 16, East 86th Street Cinemas, Empire 25, Kips Bay Theatre, Lincoln Square, 19th Street East 6, 64th and 2nd, 34th Street Theatre, and Village Theatre VII.)

PIECES OF APRIL

Katie Holmes continues to distance herself from her "Dawson's Creek" past, in this sensitive drama written and directed by Peter Hedges. The apple-cheeked actress surrounds her eyes with mascara and slumps her shoulders as April, a rebellious daughter living a shabby-chic life style on the Lower East Side. Her transformation works, for the most part, but the movie's real center of gravity is Patricia Clarkson, as April's mother, suffering from breast cancer. It's a challenging role; Hedges wrote the character as someone who can no longer tolerate sympathy, and Clarkson manages to express vulnerability along with the dry, caustic wit of a woman who has made her reckoning with death. The movie has April reuniting with her mother for Thanksgiving, but it's not a depressing or cheaply sentimental story. With Oliver Platt, Alison Pill, Alice Drummond, and Derek Luke lending fine support as family and boyfriend. Shot on digital video, in a style that is sometimes claustrophobic.—*M.A.* (Lincoln Square and Sunshine Cinema.)

SCARY MOVIE 3

The latest installment in the profitable series of horror-movie spoofs is also the first not written and directed by the fitfully brilliant, if uneven, Wayans brothers. Instead, the movie marks a return to an earlier era of kitchen-sink comedy: the director is David Zucker ("Airplane!," "The Naked Gun"), and Pat Proft, his longtime collaborator, is one of the many writers credited on the project. While the original "Scary Movie" was practically a scene-by-scene lampoon of the already parodic "Scream" franchise, this one, in classic Zucker fashion, is far more scattershot: it mocks the entire oeuvre of M. Night Shyamalan, the death-by-videotape shocker "The Ring" (one of the most inspired sequences is a parody of that film's creepy black-and-white movie-within-a-movie), and even the hip-hop Horatio Alger story "8 Mile," which isn't a horror movie unless you happen to be Eminem's mother. The spirit is willing, but the material is never quite there, despite game performances from Anna Faris, Charlie Sheen, Queen Latifah, Leslie Nielsen, Jenny McCarthy, Pamela Anderson, George Carlin, and the Michael Jackson impersonator Edward Moss.—*Ben Greenman* (Battery Park 16, Chelsea Cinemas, East 86th Street Cinemas, Empire 25, Kips Bay Theatre, Lincoln Square, Sutton 1 and 2, 34th Street Theatre, and Union Square.)

SCHOOL OF ROCK

Fans of Jack Black, your cup runneth over. He plays Dewey Finn, a mediocre but enthusiastic guitarist who bluffs his way into a substitute-teaching position at an exclusive private elementary school. At first, the job is purgatory, but then it's paradise: some of the fifth graders turn out to be skilled classical musicians, and soon Black begins instructing them in the finer points of power chords. The movie nostalgically celebrates the liberating power of classic rock—the way it could impart coolness to all true believers. The kids are cute, and their acting, for better or worse, belongs to the amateurish tradition of "The Bad News Bears." Mike White's somewhat (for him) generic script sets the stage for Black to cut loose. The actor has a knack for moving his body in funny ways, and he sings and prances for the camera in a risky and aerobic performance. Joan Cusack offers fine support as the tightly wound principal. Richard Linklater directed, with his trademark touch of conveying milieu.—*M.A.* (42nd Street E Walk, Kips Bay Theatre, Lincoln Square, New York Twin, 19th Street East 6, Orpheum VII, and Village Theatre VII.)

SHATTERED GLASS
If you are searching for the definitive illustration of a tempest in a teacup, look no further. The writer and director Billy Ray has filmed the story of Stephen Glass, the young reporter who forged facts in a string of pieces that he wrote for *The New Republic* in the late nineteen-nineties. Glass is expertly played by Hayden Christensen as a puppyish geek, digging himself into ever deeper holes. Glass's editors at the time were Michael Kelly (Hank Azaria), who was fired in the midst of the Glass farrago, and then Chuck Lane (Peter Sarsgaard), who fired Glass himself. Insiders may lap this stuff up, but visitors from the outside world will wonder what the fuss is about, and the movie is scripted, shot, and scored with such undying solemnity that fits of shameful giggles may be heard in cinemas across the land. With Chloë Sevigny, naturally, as one of Glass's fellow-reporters.—*A.L.* (11/3/03) (Angelika Film Center and Paris.)

THE STATION AGENT
The writer and director Tom McCarthy has turned his attention to a New Jersey backwater and come up with something lyrical, taciturn, and stripped of sentimentality. Peter Dinklage plays Fin, a dwarf who inherits a cabinlike home beside a railroad track in Newfoundland, in Morris County. Fin loves trains and not much else—hardly surprising, given that the world has shown him little more than a laugh and a sneer—and he is none too thrilled when his quiet space is invaded. Over time, though, he warms to the invaders: Joe (Bobby Cannavale), loud and lonely, who sells coffee and hot dogs from a neighboring van, and Olivia (Patricia Clarkson), a painter, still mourning the loss of a young son. The three of them fall in with one another, then fall out, then gradually fall back in; like some of the best short stories, the picture evades grandeur, mature enough to linger on what nearly happens. None of the central performers put a foot wrong, and McCarthy takes care not to insist that small is beautiful; rather, he and Dinklage leave us reflecting that small can be angry, tired, and tough.—*A.L.* (10/6/03) (Angelika Film Center, BAM Rose Cinemas, and Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)

SYLVIA
If Mel Brooks had got his hands on the story of Ted Hughes and Sylvia Plath, we could have been treated to a chorus line of suicidal poets chanting "It's a gas!" As it is, we must make do with this bleak account of intertwining lives. Plath (Gwyneth Paltrow) meets Ted Hughes (Daniel Craig) in 1956 and marries him shortly afterward, to the polite consternation of her mother (Blythe Danner). The action switches from a morose England to a bright and bracing America, then back again; the second half of the picture leads us through the plunging of Plath's moods, the publication of her poems, and her death, in 1963. The screenwriter, John Brownlow, and the director, Christine Jeffs, handle this material with patience and tact, and Paltrow is unafraid to show the sour and simmering side of her heroine. We come away convinced of the poets' shared intensity, and deeply relieved that we are able to observe it from a safe distance.—*A.L.* (10/20/03) (Angelika Film Center and Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)

ALSO PLAYING

BUS 174
Village East Cinemas.

ELF
Battery Park 16, East 86th Street Cinemas, Empire 25, Kips Bay Theatre, Lincoln Square, 19th Street East 6, 34th Street Theatre, and Village Theatre VII.

IN THE CUT (10/27/03)
Empire 25, First & 62nd Cinemas, Kips Bay Theatre, and Sunshine Cinema.

LOST IN TRANSLATION (9/15/03)
BAM Rose Cinemas, Beekman, Chelsea Cinemas, Empire 25, Kips Bay Theatre, Lincoln Square, and Village Theatre VII.

LOVE ACTUALLY
Battery Park 16, Empire 25, Kips Bay Theatre, Lincoln Square, 19th Street East 6, 72nd Street East, 34th Street Theatre, and Village Theatre VII.

TO BE AND TO HAVE (9/29/03)
Cinema Village and Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.

THEATRE ADDRESSES

Unless noted, call 212-777-FILM for show times.

Angelika Film Center, 18 W. Houston St.
Astor Plaza, 44th St. at Broadway.
Battery Park 16, West St. at Vesey St.
Beekman, Second Ave. at 66th St.
Chelsea Cinemas, 260 W. 23rd St.
Chelsea West, 333 W. 23rd St.
Cinemas 1, 2, and 3, Third Ave. at 60th St.
Cinema Village, 22 E. 12th St. (212-924-3363).
East 86th Street Cinemas, Third Ave. at 86th St.
84th Street Sixplex, Broadway at 84th St.
Empire 25, on 42nd St. near Eighth Ave. (212-398-3939).
59th Street East Cinema, 239 E. 59th St.
First & 62nd Cinemas, 400 E. 62nd St.
42nd Street E Walk, 42nd St. near Eighth Ave.
Kips Bay Theatre, Second Ave. at 32nd St.
Lincoln Plaza Cinemas, Broadway at 63rd St. (212-757-2280).
Lincoln Square, Broadway at 68th St.
New York Twin, Second Ave. at 66th St.
19th Street East 6, Broadway at 19th St.
Orpheum VII, Third Ave. at 86th St.
Paris, 4 W. 58th St. (212-688-3800).
Quad Cinema, 34 W. 13th St.
72nd Street East, Third Ave. at 71st St.
64th and 2nd, Second Ave. at 64th St.
62nd & Broadway, 62 W. 62nd St.
Sunshine Cinema, 139-143 E. Houston St.
Sutton 1 and 2, Third Ave. at 57th St.
34th Street Theatre, 312 W. 34th St.
Union Square, Broadway at 13th St.
Village East Cinemas, Second Ave. at 12th St.
Village Theatre VII, Third Ave. at 11th St.
Ziegfeld, 141 W. 54th St.

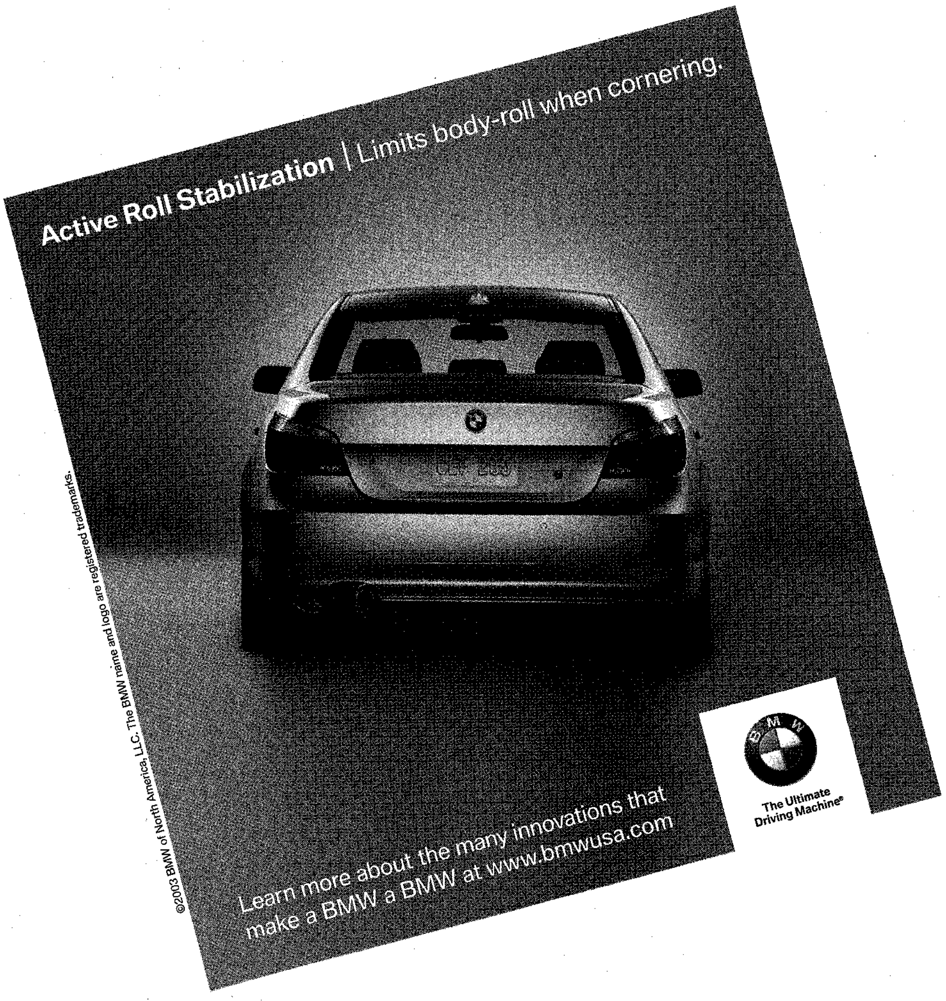
REVIVALS, CLASSICS, ETC.

Titles with a dagger are reviewed above.

AMERICAN MUSEUM OF THE MOVING IMAGE
35th Ave. at 36th St., Astoria (718-784-0077)—Preview screenings, followed by a discussion with the director. Nov. 19 at 7: "Big Fish" (2003, Tim Burton). ♦ Nov. 25 at 7: "In America" (2003, Jim Sheridan). ♦ "Cinema India." Nov. 21 at 7:30: "Dil Chahta Hai" (2001, Farhan Akhtar; in Hindi and Urdu). ♦ Through Dec. 14: A Francis Ford Coppola retrospective. Nov. 22 at 2: "Dementia 13" (1963). ♦ Nov. 22 at 4: "You're a Big Boy Now" (1966). ♦ Nov. 22-23 at 6:30: "The Godfather" (1972). ♦ Nov. 23 at 2: "The Rain People" (1969). ♦ Nov. 23 at 4: "Finian's Rainbow" (1968).

ANTHOLOGY FILM ARCHIVES
32 Second Ave., at 2nd St. (212-505-5110)—Nov. 19 at 9:30: "Epidemic" (1987, Lars Von Trier; in Danish and English). ♦ Nov. 19-23: "Mix 17," lesbian and gay experimental film and video. The seventeenth year of the festival includes Barbara Hammer's documentary "Resisting Paradise" and short works by Viva Ruiz and Christopher Westfall. See http://www.mixnyc.org for a complete schedule.

BAM ROSE CINEMAS
30 Lafayette Ave., Brooklyn (718-777-3456)—"Cinema Tropical." Nov. 19 at 4:30, 6:50, and 9:10: "Saturday" (2001, Juan Villegas; in Spanish). ♦ Recent films from Austria. Unless otherwise noted, all films are in German. Nov. 20 at 7:30: Three short films from the Vienna film academy. ♦ Nov. 21 at 2 and 7: "Elsewhere" (1998, Nikolaus Geyrhalter). ♦ Nov. 22 at 2 and 6:50: "Hold-Up" (2000, Florian Flicker). ♦ Nov. 22 at 4 and 9: "The Piano Teacher"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(2002, Michael Haneke; in French). ♦ Nov. 23 at 2 and 6:50: "In the Mirror of Maya Deren" (1998, Martina Kudlacek). ♦ Nov. 23 at 4 and 9:30: "East of War" (1997, Ruth Beckermann). ♦ "History as Nightmare: The 60s." Nov. 24 at 4:30, 6:50, and 9:10: "High Plains Drifter" (†). ♦ In Memoriam: John Schlesinger. Nov. 25 at 4:30 and 8: "Far from the Madding Crowd" (1967).

FILM FORUM
W. Houston St. west of Sixth Ave. (212-727-8110)—Nov. 19-20 at 1:30, 3:30, 5:30, 7:30, and 9:30: "I Vitelloni" (1953, Federico Fellini; in Italian). ♦ Nov. 21-25 at 2, 5:30, and 8:30: "Duck, You Sucker" (†).

FLORENCE GOULD HALL
55 E. 59th St. (212-355-6160)—Through Dec. 23: "Petits Bijoux," underappreciated French films. Nov. 25 at 12:30, 3:30, 6:30, and 9: "Monsieur Gangster" (1963, Georges Lautner; in French).

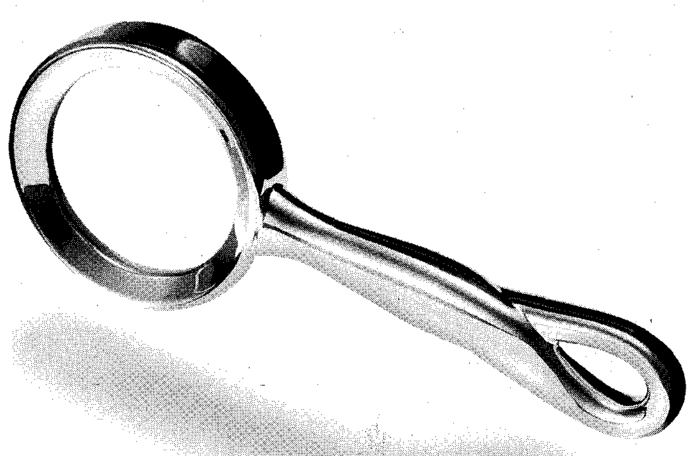
GRAMERCY THEATRE
127 E. 23rd St. (212-777-4900)—Through Nov. 30: "Global Lens: New Cinema from the Developing World." Nov. 19 at 4: "Mango Yellow" (2002, Claudio Assis). ♦ Nov. 19 at 6:30, Nov. 20 at 4, Nov. 21 at 8, Nov. 22 at 1, Nov. 23 at 4:15, Nov. 24 at 6, and Nov. 25 at 4: "Ticket to Jerusalem" (2002, Rashid Masharawi; in Arabic and Hebrew). ♦ Nov. 20 at 2: "Khorma" (2002, Jilani Saadi; in Arabic). ♦ Nov. 21 at 4: "Women's Prison" (2002, Manijeh Hekmat; in Farsi). ♦ Nov. 22 at 5: "Nothing" (2001, Juan Carlos Cremata Malberti; in Spanish). ♦ Nov. 22 at 9: "Margarette's Feast" (2002, Renato Falcão; in Portuguese). ♦ Nov. 25 at 6: "Rachida" (2002, Yamina Bachir-Chouikh; in Arabic). ♦ Nov. 25 at 8: "Wretched Lives" (2001, Joel Lamangan; in Tagalog). ♦ Through Jan. 31: "Margarethe Von Trotta and New German Cinema." All films are in German. Nov. 21 at 2: "Céleste" (1981, Percy Adlon). ♦ Nov. 23 at 7:45: "Marianne and Julianne" (1981, Von Trotta). ♦ Through Nov. 23: A Francesca Archibugi retrospective. All films are in Italian. Nov. 21 at 6: "Tomorrow" (2000). ♦ Nov. 22 at 3: "By Nightfall" (1990). ♦ Nov. 22 at 7: "The Great Pumpkin" (1992). ♦ Nov. 23 at 2: "With Closed Eyes" (1994). ♦ Nov. 23 at 6: "Shooting the Moon" (1998).

GUGGENHEIM MUSEUM
Fifth Ave. at 89th St. (212-423-3500)—Through Jan. 14: A Federico Fellini retrospective. All films are in Italian. Nov. 19 at 7: "La Dolce Vita" (1960). ♦ Nov. 21 at 7 and Nov. 22 at 3: "A Marriage Agency" (1953), "The Temptations of Doctor Antonio" (1962), and "Toby Dammit" (1968). ♦ Nov. 22 at 7: "Juliet of the Spirits" (1965).

SUNSHINE CINEMA
139-143 E. Houston St. (212-358-0573)—Midnight movies. Nov. 21-22: "Marathon Man" (1976, John Schlesinger).

THALIA THEATRE
Symphony Space, Broadway at 95th St. (212-864-5400)—An Akira Kurosawa retrospective. All films are in Japanese. Nov. 22 at 2 and Nov. 23 at 6:30: "Stray Dog" (1949). ♦ Nov. 22 at 4:15 and Nov. 23 at 8:45: "Drunken Angel" (†). ♦ Nov. 22 at 7 and Nov. 23 at 2: "Yojimbo" (1961). ♦ Nov. 22 at 9 and Nov. 23 at 4: "Sanjuro" (1962).

WALTER READE THEATRE
Lincoln Center (212-875-5600)—Through Dec. 4: "Another Russia: A Tribute to Lenfilm Studios." All films are in Russian. Nov. 19 at 1, 5, and 8:50: "Second Circle" (1990, Alexander Sokurov). ♦ Nov. 19 at 3 and 7 and Nov. 22 at 7: "The Beginning" (1970, Gleb Panfilov). ♦ Nov. 20 at 1, 4:45, and 8:30: "Alone" (1931, Grigory Kozintsev and Leonid Trauberg). ♦ Nov. 20 at 2:45 and 6:30: "Letters from a Dead Man" (1986, Konstantin Lopushansky). ♦ Nov. 21 at 1, 5, and 9 and Nov. 23 at 8:30: "Monologue" (1972, Ilya Averbakh). ♦ Nov. 21 at 3 and 7 and Nov. 22 at 5: "Seven Courageous" (1936, Sergei Gerasimov). ♦ Nov. 22 at 9 and Nov. 24 at 1 and 6: "Khroustaliov, My Car!" (1998, Alexei Guerman). ♦ Nov. 23 at 1: "October" (1928, Sergei Eisenstein and Grigory Alexandrov). ♦ Nov. 23 at 3:15 and 6:45: "Living with an Idiot" (1993, Alexander Rogozhkin). ♦ Nov. 23 at 4:45 and Nov. 25 at 1: "Disaster" (1977, Dinara Asanova). ♦ Nov. 24 at 3:45 and 8:45 and Nov. 25 at 3: "My Friend Ivan Lapshin" (1984, Alexei Guerman).



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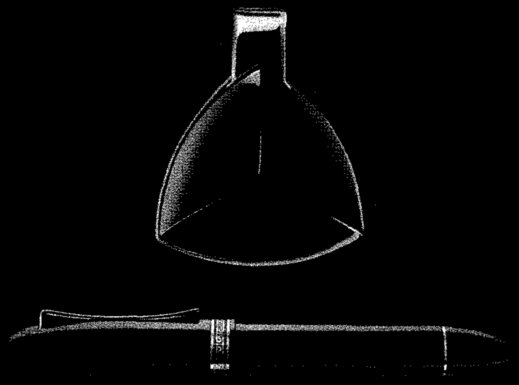

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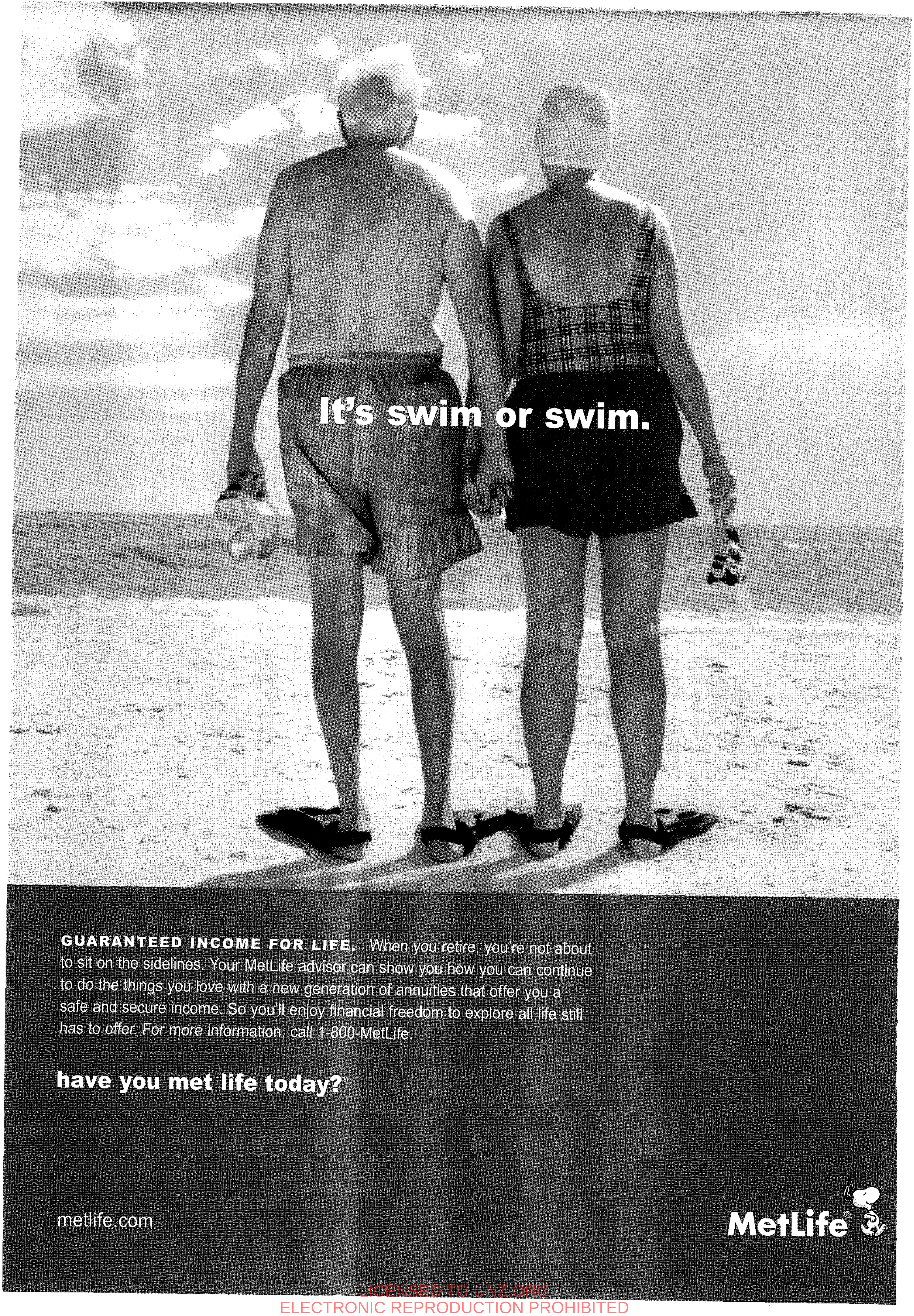

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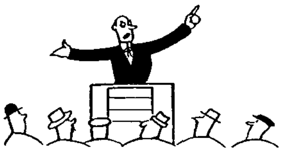
THE
NEW YORKER

THE TALK OF THE TOWN

COMMENT
UNCRAZY CALIFORNIA

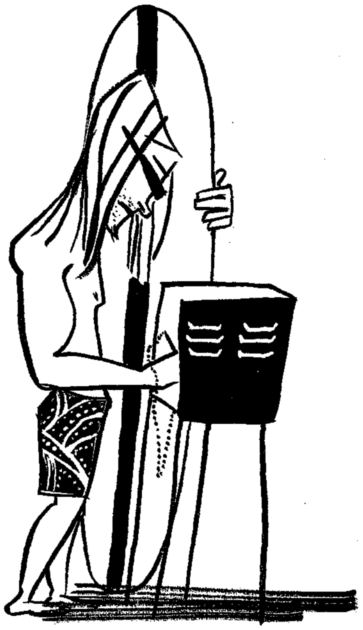


On Monday of this week, for the first time in television (and American) history, a gubernatorial inauguration is to be carried live and coast to coast on all three networks—CNN, MSNBC, and FNC. Network TV ain't what it used to be. Still, this is a notable first. Even in California, it isn't every day that so singular a figure as Arnold Schwarzenegger is solemnly invested with supreme executive power, especially under such astonishing circumstances.

The rest of the country got a lot of derisive laughs out of the California recall election. It provoked a few rueful chuckles in the Golden State, too. Viewed strictly as a process, though, it functioned remarkably well. And the transition, which many people quite reasonably expected to be bumpy and rancorous, was smooth and collegial. The involuntarily outgoing governor, Gray Davis, had every right to feel bitter at getting the boot just eleven months after being reëlected. If he had gone all sullen and uncoöperative, that would have been only human (a category he has always had trouble fitting into, poor guy). But he was the soul of graciousness after his defeat; and Schwarzenegger, of course, is a genial fellow. Perhaps the biggest reason for the smoothness of the transition, though, was that Schwarzenegger had won the election so convincingly that no one could quibble about the legitimacy of his right to the office.

ILLUSTRATIONS BY TOM BACHTELL

The size and clarity of the victory came as a surprise. The most glaring flaw in the design of the recall process is the danger of a grossly undemocratic outcome. A two-part ballot—thumbs up or thumbs down on the incumbent, and then, if it's thumbs down, the awarding of the job to the first-place plurality winner among, in this case, a hundred and thirty-five replacement candidates—created the mathematical possibility of an election in which the loser outpolls the winner by better than fifty to one. "If Davis is recalled," the columnist George F. Will predicted, "he probably will be replaced by a governor who received substantially fewer votes than were cast against the recall." Many observers agreed—me, for example. (In a dispatch from California for this magazine, I confidently called that outcome "a near-certainty.") These predictions were, to put it mildly, wrong. On October 7th, Schwarzenegger got 4,203,596 votes, or 48.6 per cent of the total. This was more than the vote for retaining Davis (4,006,021, or 44.6 per cent), much more than the vote for Schwarzenegger's nearest rival, Lieutenant Governor Cruz Bustamente (2,723,768, or 31.5 per cent), and more, even, than the vote for Davis in the last regular election (3,469,025, or 47.4 per cent). Nor did the California recall have the undemocratic taint of the 2000 Presidential election, in which, on top of Al Gore's half-million-vote plurality over George W. Bush, left-of-center candidates outpolled right-of-center ones, fifty-one to forty-nine per cent. In California, Republicans of various stripes amassed well over sixty per cent.



Governor Davis and his supporters portrayed the recall as a cynical attempt to overturn a democratic election, likening it not only to Florida in 2000 but also to the Clinton impeachment and this year's Republican redistricting coup in Texas. The public, rightly, found these parallels unconvincing. It's one thing to overturn an election by means of a judicial ukase, a partisan parody of a trial, or an orgy of gerrymandering. It's another to overturn an election by means of another election. The recall did indeed originate as a cynical Republican power grab—and it ended as one, in that Republicans have now grabbed power in Sacramento. But along the way it also turned out to be a pretty good exercise in American democracy. The attention of the public and the press was riveted, even before Schwarzenegger entered the race. The issues got a thorough airing. And voter turnout was high—twenty per cent higher than in the regular gubernatorial election the year before.

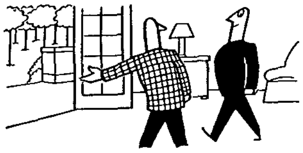
In the early stages of the recall campaign, it wasn't just partisan Democrats who grumbled that the whole process was inherently mischievous. George Will called it "vandalism." The Washington *Post's* David S. Broder, the Yoda of the political press corps, called it a "perversion of representative government." In the wake of Schwarzenegger's victory, talk of actually repealing the recall provision of the California constitution—which was added in 1911 and until this year had never been used against a statewide official—has died away. But there is a move afoot to tinker with it. Mark Ridley-Thomas, a Democratic state legislator from Los Angeles, is pushing an amendment that would eliminate the replacement ballot, letting the lieutenant governor take over after a successful recall. It's a well-meaning proposal, but its main effect, besides robbing the process of much of its interest, would be to turn a recall into a face-off between two incumbents, the governor and the lieutenant governor, who in California are separately elected.

Here's a better way: choose the replacement not by plurality but by instant runoff voting. Under I.R.V., a voter lists as many candidates as he or she wishes in order of preference. In the counting, the electoral computer drops the least popular candidates, one by one, and instantly recounts the votes for the candidates who remain until one of them accumulates an outright majority. That way, the booby trap of the existing recall process—the strong possibility that an incumbent who is unacceptable to a small majority will get traded in for a challenger who is unacceptable to a large majority—would be eliminated, while its advantages would be left intact. (Under I.R.V., by the way, Schwarzenegger would still have won. He would have received fewer first-place votes, but the instant runoffs would probably have ended up giving him a two-to-one majority.)

A recall election like California's is exciting, dramatic, and fun, with or without an action star heading the cast. (Schwarzenegger boycotted the campaign's kickoff TV debate, but it scored high in the ratings anyway.) The heavy media attention somewhat reduces the importance of paid advertising and, therefore, of money. Voter turnout soars. Because there are multiple candidates instead of just two, mudslinging, which discredits the slinger as well as the spattered, is riskier; and, because the range of views on offer is wider, debate is livelier. This recall was a Technicolor, special-effects-crammed, Austro-American version of a British snap election. It featured the populist equivalent of a vote of no confidence, and the campaign, like campaigns in Britain, was blessedly short—just eighty days, still plenty of time to allow voters to make an informed choice without forcing them to make politics a way of life. Add the I.R.V. tweak, and the California circus would be a model for us all.

—Hendrik Hertzberg

DEPT. OF OVERSTATEMENT
ROOM WITHOUT A VIEW



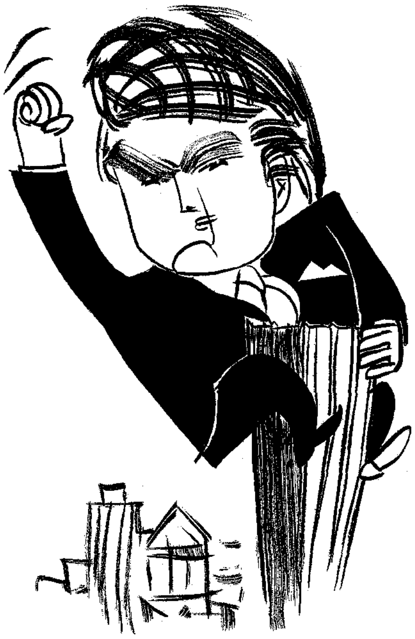
Let's say you're looking to drop fifteen or twenty million on a condo in the new, twin-towered Time Warner Center, on Columbus Circle. What might you be getting? Four or five thousand square feet, for a start. His and hers marble bathrooms. Ten-foot ceilings, nine-foot windows. A "world-class location." The "most commanding view of any residences overlooking Central Park." The list of perks and amenities goes on. But now, if your bedroom faces north (as most do), you'll get the added privilege of waking up each morning to a personal greeting from Donald Trump: "Your views aren't so great, are they? We have the *real* Central Park views and address! Best Wishes, 'The Donald.'"

By "we," the Donald means his Trump International Hotel and Tower, which looms, tall and dark, just across the roundabout from Time Warner. His taunt comes in the form of four banners affixed to the top floors of its south-facing side. With a double-take and a squint, you can read it from the street, and from the upper-floor windows of the new Time Warner condos it is impossible to miss, more prominent even than the iconic Christopher Columbus statue out front.

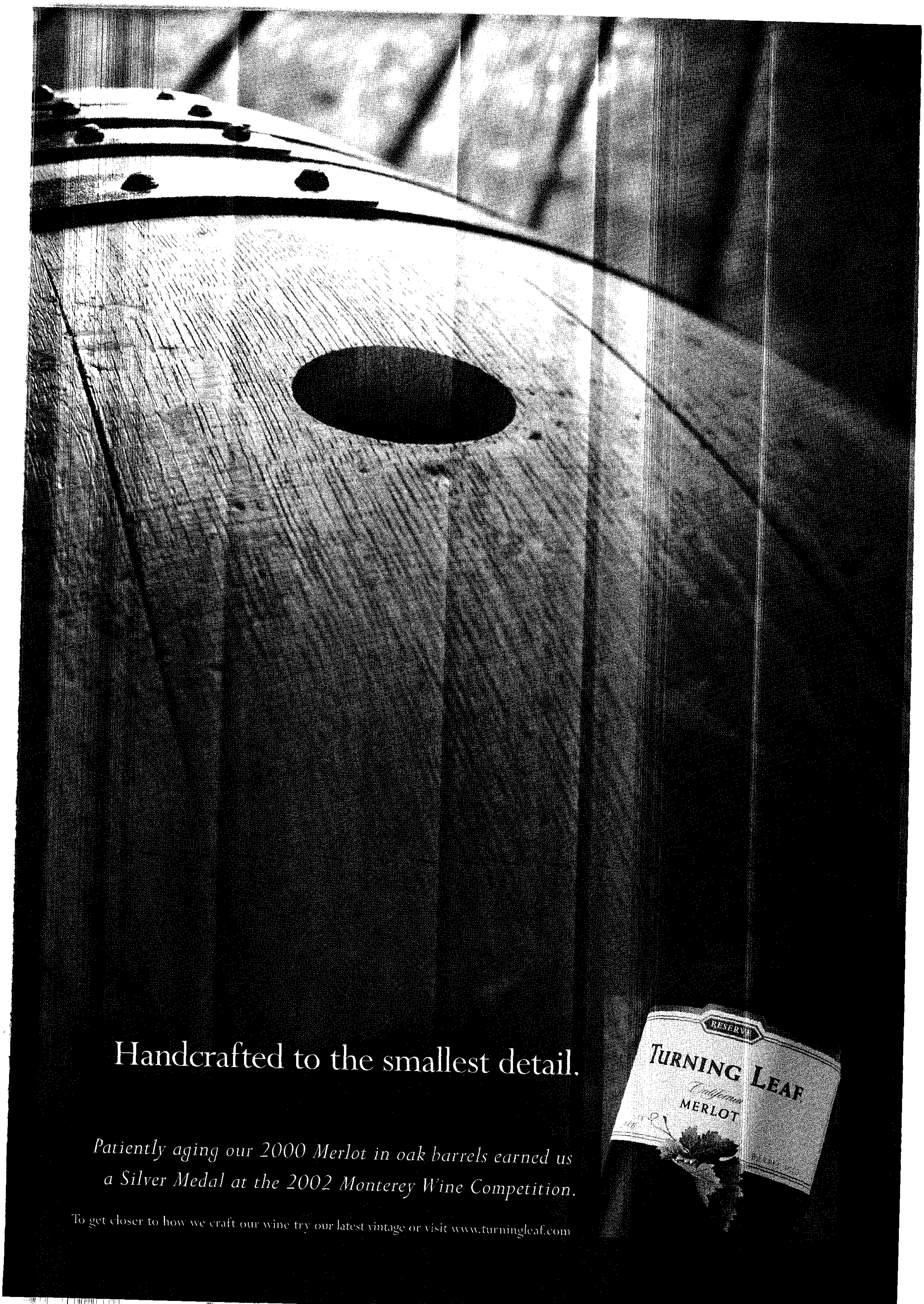
"We are on Central Park West," Trump said last week. "Our address is No. 1 Central Park West. They are not on Central Park, although they advertise that they are." The developers of the Time Warner Center have named their southern tower One Central Park, despite a postal address of 25 Columbus Circle. "They're not anywhere near Central Park," Trump continued. "What has happened is that people have gone up to their apartments for the first time, and they've looked at what they purchased. And they're aghast at what they see, because they see the back of my building."

Trump has a point. If Trump International is "less than a stone's throw" from the Park, according to the standard sales pitch (and it is), then the residences at One Central Park are fairly more than a long javelin toss away, and are separated from it by some of the most treacherous pedestrian traffic crossings in the city. By distance-from-grass, the Time Warner condos have no more claim to a Central Park I.D. than an apartment building on, say, 112th Street and Adam Clayton Powell Boulevard.

Truth in advertising, of course, has never been a strength of the real-estate business. One may recall the "Simpsons" episode in which Marge goes to work as a real-estate agent and learns to substitute "motivated seller" for "that house is on fire." This is especially true in New York, where Trump has refined the embellish-



Donald Trump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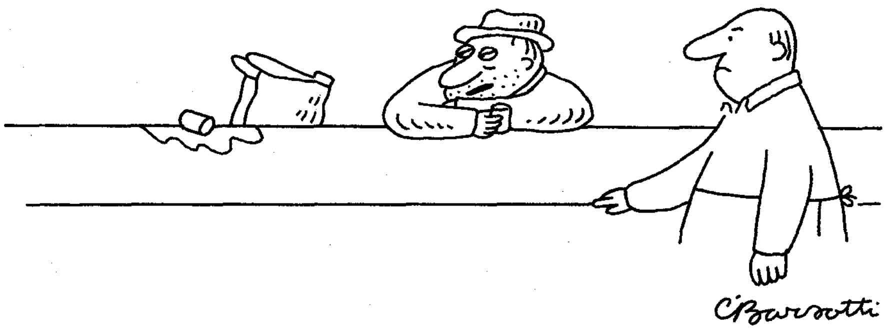


"Let Halliburton clean it up."

ment game, most famously with his World Tower, over by the United Nations. It is ninety stories tall, as the elevators claim, only if you skip eighteen numbers along the way. ("I call it truthful hyperbole," Trump once said of his marketing philosophy. "It's an innocent form of exaggeration.") The Time Warner Center, following suit, offers penthouses on the eightieth floor, even though, if you count from the ground up, the building has only fifty-three stories.

Trump International, for its part, used to be the Gulf & Western Building. It was white, forty-four stories tall, and situated at 15 Columbus Circle. In the mid-nineties, Trump refashioned it as a luxury tower. The white exterior was replaced by sleek dark glass; the obligatory gold "T's" were etched and inscribed wherever possible. When it opened, in January of 1997, it had fifty-two stories ("Manhattan's most stunning views") and "the most important new address in the world": No. 1 Central Park West.

A recent visit to a fifty-first-floor penthouse apartment of Trump's (price: twenty-one million) confirmed one of the basic claims: the views are undeniably "awesome" and "unobstructed." A representative of the Time Warner Center last week refused to offer a comparative view. For fifty dollars, however, it was possible to buy a ticket to "Rooms with a View of Central Park," a design exhibit sponsored by *Architectural Digest* and held on the seventy-third (i.e., forty-sixth) floor of One Central Park. On Wednesday afternoon, several dozen interior-design buffs ambled through two elegantly furnished condos with such varied luxuries as leather floors and a television in the gentleman's closet.

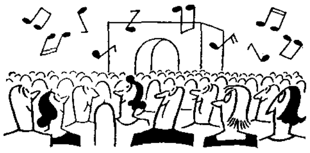
In the "Library Dining Room," which featured framed proverbs from William Blake ("The road of excess leads to the palace of wisdom"; "You never know what is enough unless you know what is more than enough"), a group of well-dressed women gathered near the window to take in the view. Competing for their attention with the trees in Central Park was a mess of satellite dishes and antennae planted atop Trump International, and the boastful sign.

"Isn't it horrible, that he said that?" one woman exclaimed.

"You know, if you just keep the curtain pulled one-third of the way across, then you don't have to see it," another replied. "You'd still get to see the skaters," she continued, pointing east, away from Trump's tower, in the direction of Wollman Rink. "And the fall foliage—isn't it gorgeous?"

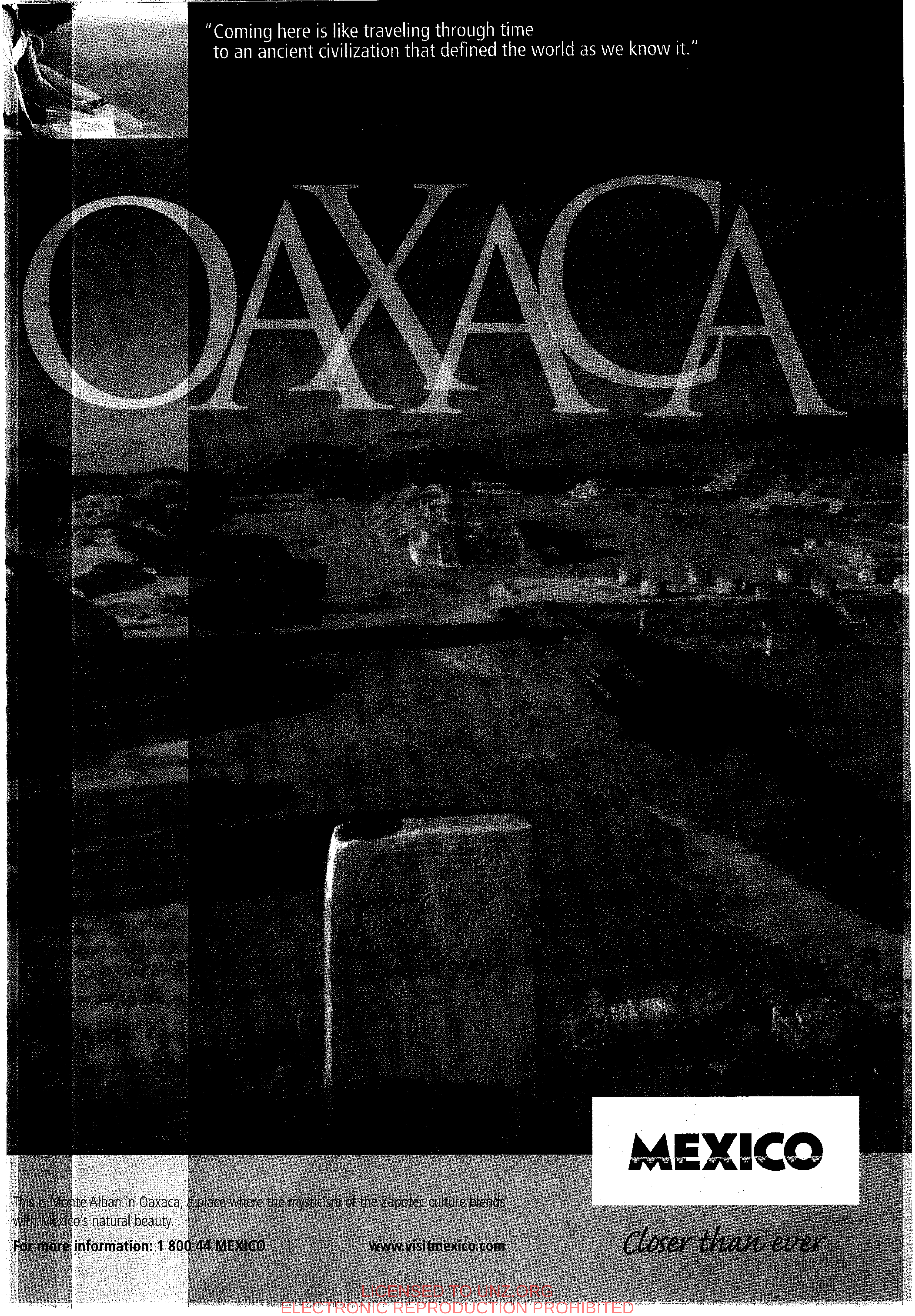
—*Ben McGrath*

NASHVILLE POSTCARD
CASH ON TAPE



If you've been thinking about Johnny Cash since his death, two months ago, you might have been thinking of him as the guy who wrote and recorded dozens of hits that weren't rock and roll, country, rockabilly, or pop but all those things at the same time. You might be thinking of him as the singer who is said to have infuriated Richard Nixon by performing the anti-authority song "What Is Truth" at the White House. You might think of him as one of the Highwaymen, with Willie Nelson, Kris Kristofferson, and Waylon Jennings, or as the son of a cotton farmer from Arkansas who watched the women in his family weep over the damage that picking cotton did to their hands. You might think of him as a drunk and a drug addict who owned up to his problems and got clean.

You might not think of Johnny Cash as a historiographer, but he was one, in his way, as his autobiography, "Cash," demonstrates. He discusses, at some length, differing versions not only of events in his own life (for example, dismissing the calumny that he was a hotel-room trasher) but of larger events, including the Lewis and Clark Expedition, about which he read extensively, concluding, "People's experiences and memories are so subjective. It makes you wonder about the whole idea of 'historical fact.'" As a historiographer-verging-on-epistemologist, Cash might have been interested in the memorial concert and tribute to him at the Ryman Auditorium, in Nashville, last week—a tribute that included performances by Rosanne Cash, Willie Nelson, Kris Kristofferson, George Jones, and Sheryl Crow, and speeches by Tim Robbins, the evening's master of ceremonies, and Al Gore. He would have been interested because Country Music Television was taping the event for broadcast, and, as often happens when television covers a live music event, the live event becomes less real, less alive—in a way, less historical—than the artifact cobbled from it. At the entrance to the auditorium, ticket-holders were greeted by the usual legal-release placard: "This event is being taped for broadcast on television. If you do not wish to appear in this broadcast"—with your hair a fright, mistress in tow, brown necktie, or playing hooky from your business dinner, the implication goes—"you should not attend this event." Before the show started, a disembodied voice asked the audience to ignore "the call of nature" during the speeches and musical numbers, so that shots of the hall would not catch people getting up and sitting down. What ensued was a sort of half-Surrealist, half-Cubist musical presentation: widely interspersed songs (the "concert" lasted four and a half hours); sepulchral silences; informal banter among the participants; TV cameras on booms repositioning themselves like mantises; artificially produced fog, which protectively humidified the acoustic instruments, shrouding long, eerie blank periods onstage while the TV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crew readied itself for the next number; flubs by Tim Robbins that he redid on the spot (he kept pronouncing "phone" as "fe-unne," like Inspector Clouseau). At one point, Robbins had to deliver a phantom re-introduction of Jones, Kristofferson, and Nelson, who had started the show, with "Big River," and the audience, without being cued, gave a standing ovation to the arrival onstage of nobody at all. Like so many extras, people knew what they were supposed to do. It felt as though all involved—audience, singers, speakers—were shuffling about in television's warehouse, waiting to be assembled and shipped into televised reality. "Tim, we love you," someone shouted from the balcony during a lull. "I hope they keep that in the TV show," Robbins replied. (Well, it's here, at any rate.)

But the photographs of Cash, behind the performers, and the anecdotes about him, and the complex and moving speech his daughter Rosanne made near the end of the evening—and, four or five times, the music itself—cut through the Matrix-like atmosphere with the kind of authenticity and unexampled individuality that Johnny Cash stood for. Especially Hank Williams, Jr.'s, erotic-anthem rendition of "Ring of Fire." And Rosanne Cash singing "Tennessee Flat-Top Box," a skiffly Cash song about a young guitar player who wins the hearts of "all the girls from there to Austin" and disappears and then resurfaces as a star. Neither the TV special nor this nor any other account could convey that number's style and grace. As Cash might have said of the Lewis and Clark Expedition, "I guess you had to be there."

—*Daniel Menaker*

ON THE BALL

> Officially, administration officials say that they had expected the drop in support for the president, and that they were not concerned about the turn of events. "We put out a memo three months ago predicting that this was going to happen," Dan Bartlett, the White House communications director, said.
>
> —*The Times.*

June 23, 2003
MEMO
From: White House Office of Predictive Services
Re: POTUS Support Drop

After a thorough analysis of available data, this office has come to the conclusion that, sometime between the twenty-second and the twenty-fifth of September, a CNN-*USA Today*-Gallup poll will show that the President's approval rating has fallen to fifty per cent, the lowest it will have been since he took office. This should not be cause for concern, as Administration officials will be able to state unequivocally that they expected the drop. We may want to highlight some, or all, of the following positive developments that, based on our analysis, we can predict with a high degree of certainty.

- The Cleveland Cavaliers will lose the first five games of the regular season, and the early word on their much touted eighteen-year-old phenom LeBron James will be that he has trouble shooting from the perimeter. But within the first fifteen seconds of his first game at Madison Square Garden, James will hit a seventeen-foot jump shot, and he will go on to score seventeen points in a 94–80 rout of the New York Knicks.
- *Variety* will report that horror laffer "Scary Movie 3," during its frosh outing (opening weekend), took in a boffo $49.7 million, prompting such headlines as "SPOOKY SPOOF RAISES THE ROOF" and "'SCARY 3' PREEM A B.O. SCREAM."
- The untimely passing of actor John Ritter will result in a very special episode of "8 Simple Rules . . . for Dating My Teenage Daughter." Network executives will bravely decide not to cancel the show.
- Facing murder charges, millionaire real-estate heir Robert Durst will admit in court to butchering a neighbor, putting his body parts in garbage bags, and dumping them into Galveston Bay, but nevertheless will be found not guilty.
- Despite the media's lopsided focus on setbacks in Iraq, there will be a series of major successes to which we can point, including:

Iraq declared one-hundred-per-cent free of W.M.D.s: mission accomplished!

Several original members of Up with People! reunite for a comeback tour to boost troop morale.

Baghdad's Bechtel Vocational High School (formerly Saddam Polytech) mounts well-received junior-class production of "Godspell."

Families of slain soldiers allowed to mourn in privacy, without the disruptive presence of the President.

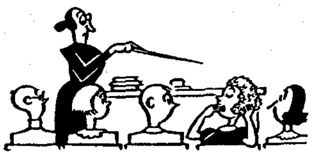
- Know your biorhythms:

Best day to admit that Saddam had no connection to 9/11: September 17th.

Best day to make case for staying in Iraq by saying, "We must never forget the lessons of September 11th": October 28th.

—*Adam Green*

THE SCHOOLS
TOUGH SHELL



Bill Gates may have donated fifty-one million dollars to the New York City public-school system this fall, but Amy Wallace's first graders still can't afford a new home for their pet crab, Clifford. Wallace, who is twenty-seven, teaches at P.S. 184, in the Brownsville section of Brooklyn, a school that is unable to provide her even with pencils and paper. A few days ago, she announced to her students, who were sitting cross-legged on the scuffed brown linoleum at the back of Room 201, "Today, we're going to be learning about hermit crabs. What do you know about crabs?"

Hands shot up: "If they pinch your arm, you can bleed!"; "They come from the South!"; "You can crack the pieces and eat the chicken inside!"

"Chicken?" Wallace said, smiling. "Hmm." She picked up a covered, clear-plastic dish and rested it on her lap. "I brought in a little friend of mine," she said. "His name is Clifford, and he's going to be our classroom pet." Three seashells, a sponge, and an empty baby-food jar were sitting on blue gravel at the bottom of the dish, and everyone pressed in close to look—and then shrieked as one of the shells suddenly arose, unfolding spiky antennae and hinged red legs.

"Sit on your bottoms," Wallace commanded as the children fled toward the corners of the room. "Jahrell, turn your body and stop squirming. Shanae, fold your hands just like I am." Once order was restored, she continued, "Do you think

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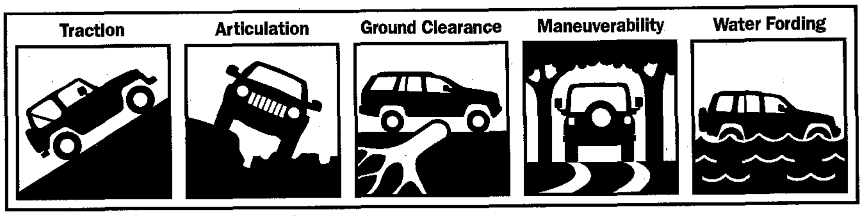
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ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Clifford was born in that shell, Tabius?"

Tabius frowned, searching her face. "Yes?"

"What do you think, Shaquera?" Shaquera cautiously shook her head. "No—that's right. As it grows, the crab finds bigger and bigger shells to live in. Why? Tristan?"

"Otherwise, he might get squashed."

"That's right! If you look closely, you'll see that he's sitting near the sponge, digging his claw into it. What do you think he's doing?"

"Doing the dishes?"

Everyone laughed. "No, that's how crabs get water when they're thirsty," Wallace said. "Now, what if Clifford went out of his shell and lived near other animals, what could happen to him? Brianna?"

"They might hurt him," Brianna said.

Last year, Wallace's first as a teacher, she bought Clifford at a Petland Discounts store. To make up for other supplies that P.S. 184 lacked, she also spent more than three thousand dollars—almost ten per cent of her take-home pay—to buy pencils, paper, chalk, tape, staples, crayons, markers, stickers, glue sticks, tambourines and maracas, paints and paintbrushes, computer software and printer cartridges, tissues, soap, a rug, a broom, a vacuum cleaner, and a library of a hundred and fifty books, among other things.

Three years ago, Charles Best, a twenty-four-year-old social-studies teacher in the Bronx, started an organization called DonorsChoose, to help colleagues like Wallace. Teachers write up grant proposals and post them on www.donorschoose.org, and then parents and other interested citizens can surf among the possibilities and decide whether they'd prefer to fund, say, "Hot Chocolate, Pajamas, and Stories Keep Us Warm!" or "Classroom Library for Gay or Questioning Teens." The price tag ranges as high as twenty thousand dollars for "A New Playground for P.S. 59," but most projects are closer in scope to the fifty-six-dollar question "Where did all the pencils go?" Two-thirds of twenty-four hundred posted proposals have been underwritten, with donors from forty-eight states contributing more than eight hundred thousand dollars. Amy Wallace's wall maps and her shaggy puppets Billy, Tiffany, and Miguel, along with six other projects, were provided through DonorsChoose. But "A Habitat for Our Hermit Crab," her plea for three hundred and ninety-one dollars to buy Clifford roomier accommodations, remains unfunded.

In Room 201, Shaquera ate a bag of popcorn and stared at the crab, which was deep inside its shell. "Hermit crabs can eat popcorn, you know," Wallace said. "Popcorn and lettuce." Shaquera pried up the lid and dropped a single kernel near Clifford's shell. "He's smelling it!" Julisa shouted. Shaquera's eyes widened. "He's coming out!"

—*Tad Friend*

THE BOARDS
CLOSED

Life on Broadway is exceedingly rough. Casts change overnight; directors get fired, critics attack, and plays close. But what is rare—it has happened only four times since 1980—is to see a play shut down before opening night. In the case of "Bobbi Boland," which starred Farrah Fawcett, the closing came with particular abruptness—after a mere seven preview performances. The producer, Joyce Johnson, has said that the play "simply does not work in a Broadway house."

Fawcett has tried to be staunch, but it is clear that the early death of "Bobbi Boland" is a torment. "It just happened so suddenly," she said late last week. "Maybe it wouldn't have been a smash, but I know it wouldn't have been the worst play ever, as some people have said."

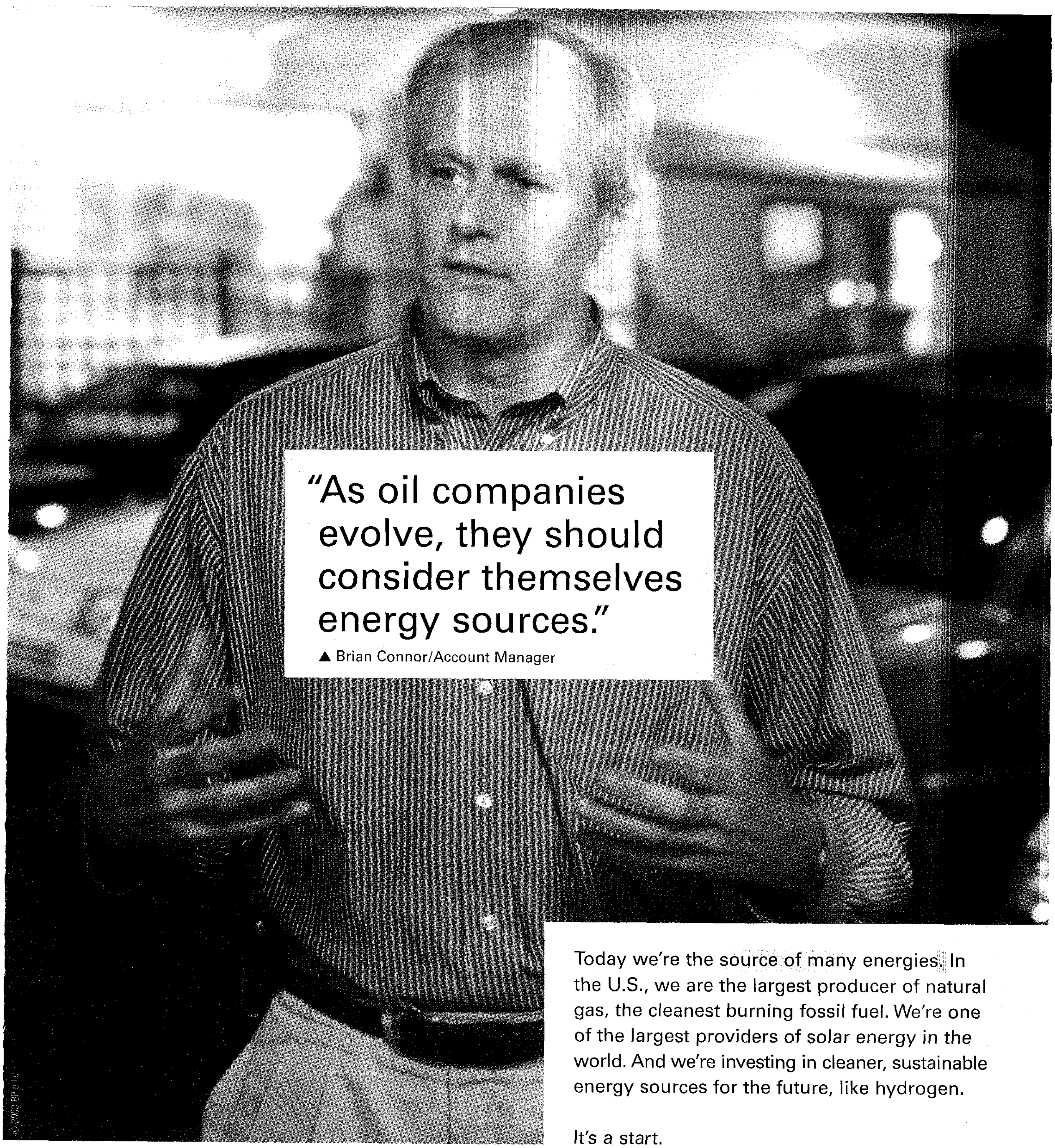
It has been a stressful time. She recalled one preview when the curtain was nearly thirty minutes late and the audience had become a little raucous in its clapping. Backstage, she didn't have her makeup person. "I didn't even see the wigs until the first preview," she said. "And there were times when I had thirty-eight seconds to take a wig off, take the skullcap off, take the pins out, change the dress, take off the jewelry, put the nightgown on, wet my hair, and the lady didn't have the spray bottle open." Another night, she went on, "I said to Joyce, 'Is this a play about wigs, or is this a play that we want to have good performances in?' "

Since the nineteen-seventies, when Fawcett, who is fifty-six, found her place in American legend—as a poster, as the most popular of "Charlie's Angels," as the owner of the most famous hair in the world—she has shown up in all sorts of worthy projects. There was Robert Duvall's "The Apostle" and a brief, recurring role in the CBS series "The Guardian," for which she won an Emmy nomination. She appeared Off Broadway, in 1983, in the play "Extremities," but "Bobbi Boland" was to have been her Broadway début.

"I had planned for the next six months," Fawcett said. She looked weary, and her hair is somewhat shorter, and curlier, than in Angelic days. "Forget the packing and the moving out here and the plans and my parents coming"—her mother is eighty-nine, her father eighty-six—"and the room I got, and my aunts and uncles, all that." She added, "I don't think it would have hurt to let us open."

She invoked Thomas Jefferson. "You know his definition of defamation? ' 'Tis a sad state we find ourselves in if we cannot get up at eight in the morning and have our cup of tea without excitedly'—this is paraphrasing—'opening up the newspaper to read about others' misfortunes whether they be true or not.' " Already she has read in the tabloids that she was drunk and didn't know her lines. Not true, she said. "I mean, I'm not putting the blame, but I did say, 'Do you really think we should go into previews not having the wigs right?' "

—*Jeffrey Frank*



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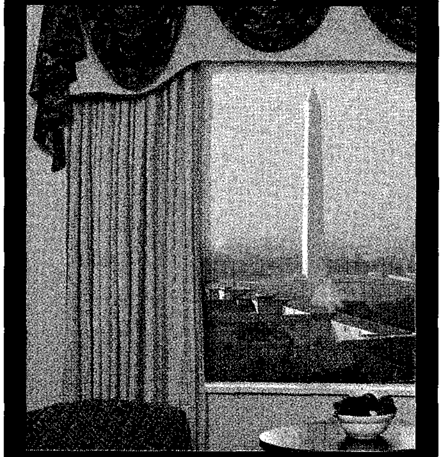

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THE SPORTING SCENE

GONE SOUTH

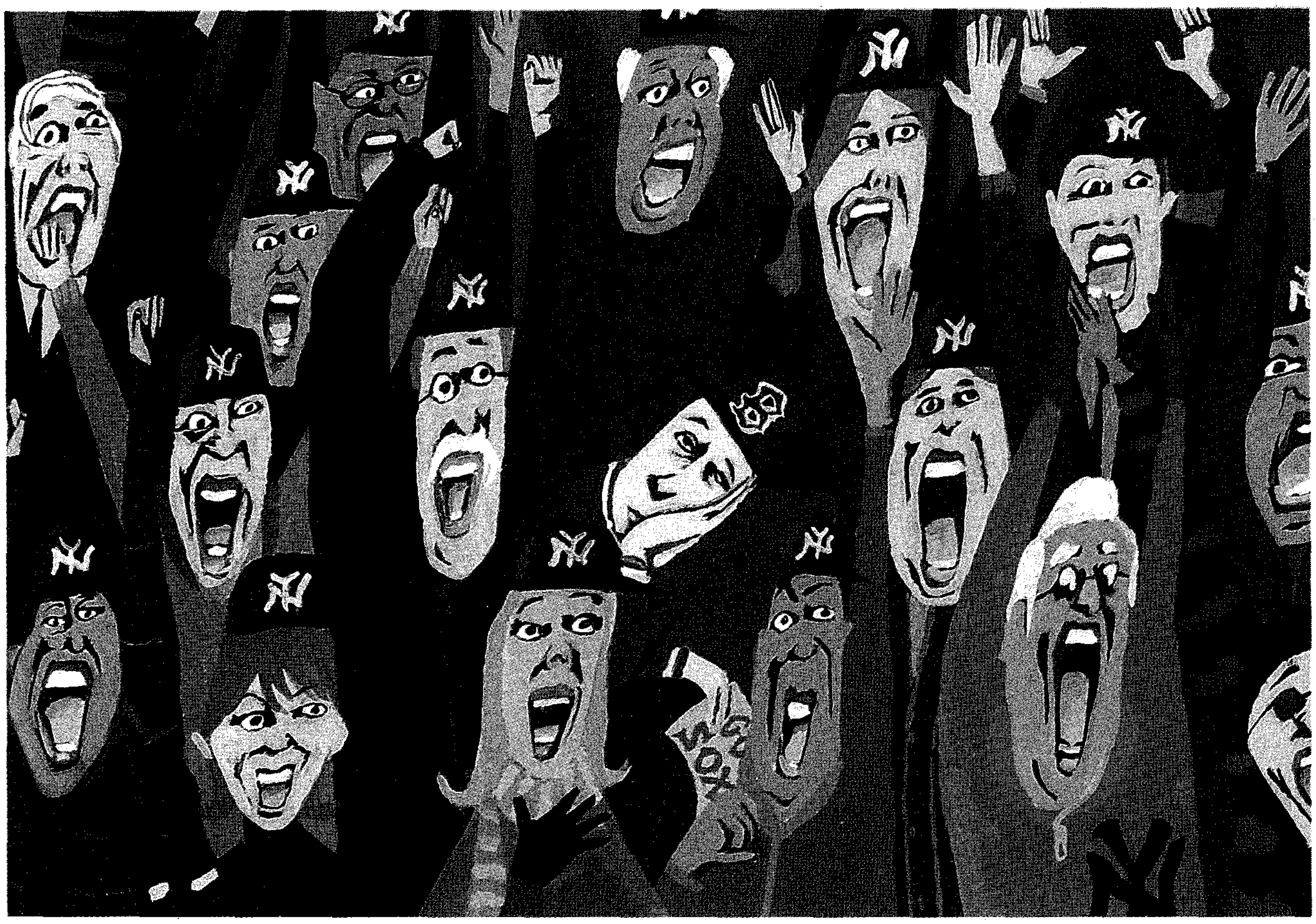
In a last surprise, the young Marlins are champs.

BY ROGER ANGELL

Baseball Commissioner Bud Selig, in a surprise news conference two days after the conclusion of the recent World Series, announced that Major League Baseball will undertake a radical change in scheduling next fall, when the Divisional and League Championship eliminations will come after the World Series, not before. "Tradition matters," Selig said, "but the fans have made it clear that they much prefer the interest and drama of the earlier rounds of post-season play, and we're going to oblige them. From now on, it's the Fall Classic first and *then* heartbreak." The commissioner confirmed reports that he had called in some top metaphysicians to tackle the contradictions implicit in such a plan. "They're gung-ho for the plan, conceptwise," Mr. Selig said. "Once we have this in hand, we're looking to clear up the designated-hitter dilemma, as well. Ambiguity is tough, but so is Roger Clemens."

Well, maybe not, but after the vibrant and confounding baseball scenes in the weeks just past, no possibility can be wholly excluded. Look what did happen:

- In the ceremonials before the third game of the American League Divisional playoffs between the Red Sox and the Oakland Athletics, a Red Sox relief pitcher named Byung-Hyun Kim heard prolonged boos from his home-team Fenway Park fans when his name was announced, and responded digitally.
- Another bird, the Yankee Stadium celebrity eagle Challenger, lost his way while performing his ceremonial flight from the center-field bleachers to a handler on the pitcher's mound before the first game of the Red Sox-Yankees American League Championship Series, wobbled past Derek Jeter (who flinched away, snatching off his cap), and flumped to the ground near home plate. Fired on the spot, the famous fowl unexpectedly emerged from retirement prior to the third game of the World Series, but now with a Sun Belt employer, and made a safe journey home for the Florida Marlins during the anthem at Pro Player Stadium, in Miami. Redemption.
- At Wrigley Field, in Chicago, Cubs left fielder Moises Alou leaped and stretched for a fly ball descending in foul ground beside a steep bank of seats, and had the ball deflected from his glove by a lifelong Cubs fan, Steve Bartman, whose name, on the instant, became inextricably woven into the hundred-and-twenty-eight-year-old history of the franchise. (As is perhaps not known to schoolchildren in Mukden or Petrozavodsk, the Cubs have not won a World Championship since 1908 and the Boston Red Sox since 1918.) The incident still left the good guys three runs ahead in the game and an easy inning and two-thirds away from a victory over the Florida Marlins in the National League Championship Series and their first trip to the World Series in fifty-eight years, but the Cubs now swiftly yielded a base on balls, a single, a clanking error by their shortstop, and an eventual eight-run rally. They lost, lost again the next night, and were eliminated. The sight of Bartman being pelted with insults and threats and cups of beer, and taken away, hiding his face, by the cops for his own safety, has stuck in mind, however. Cubs players and coaches quickly came forward to say that his instinctive grab had nothing to do with the outcome, but Bartman was subjected to later vilifications on the Internet and in the papers, and felt forced to issue a lengthy apology. Baseball is the only sport that fingers individual spectators this way and remembers their names: Sal Durante, who caught Maris's Ruth-breaking sixty-first home run in 1961; Jeffrey Maier, who reached for that short home run to right field in Yankee Stadium in a 1996 playoff against the Orioles; and Alex Popov and Patrick Hayashi, the bleacher fans at Pac Bell Stadium who ended up in a scuffle for the ball and the court costs, after Barry Bonds's seventy-



An eleventh-inning Yankee homer destroyed the hopes of Red Sox fans—not again!—in a playoff finale that had seemed theirs.

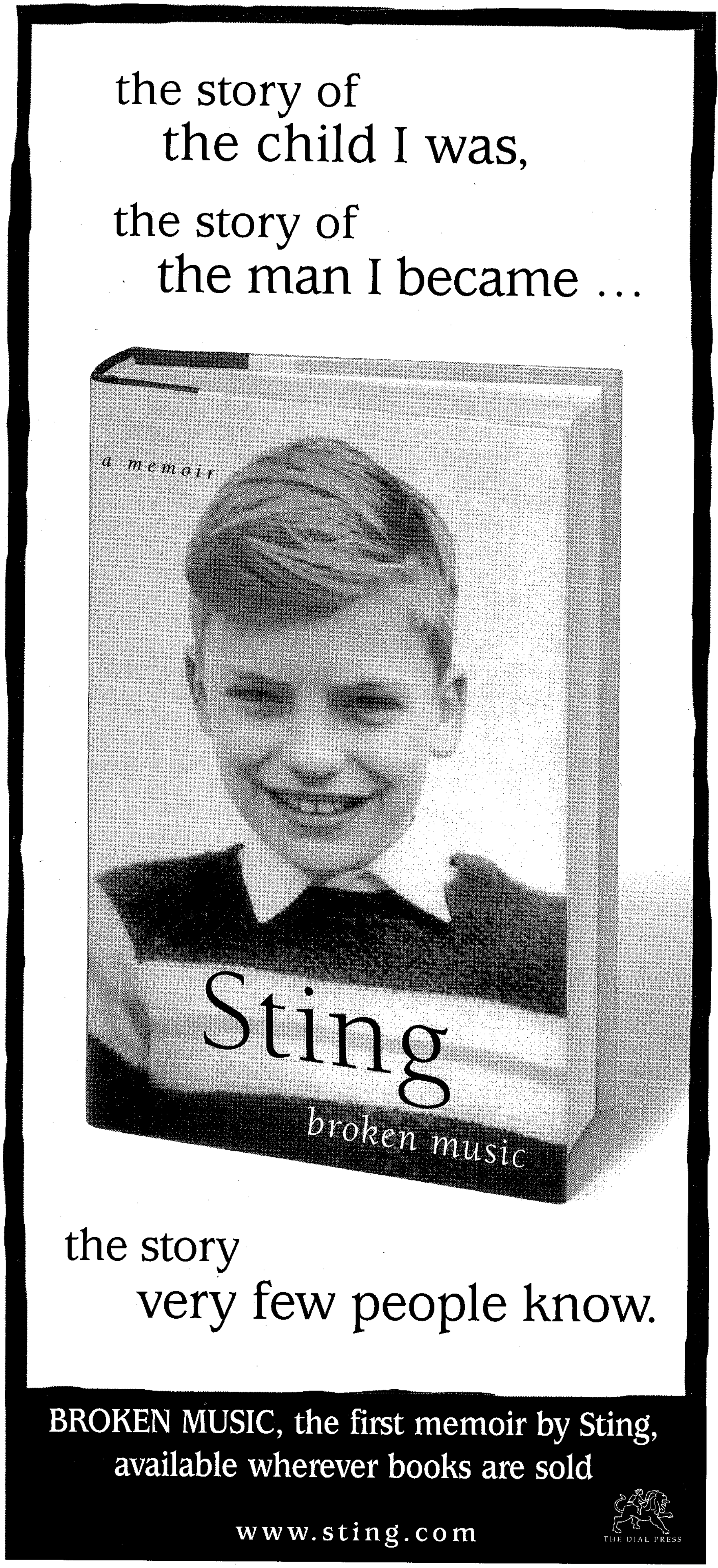
MARK ULRIKSEN

third. Ask not for whom that ball falls.

- At the Boston games, fans saw separate interference plays by Red Sox infielders in the same inning nullified when two different Oakland Athletics base runners forgot to touch home plate; witnessed the seventy-two-year-old Yankee bench Kewpie Don Zimmer throw a punch at Red Sox ace Pedro Martinez (who deflected the attack in the manner of Belmonte dealing with a heifer) during a team brawl; and (by television from the Bronx) watched Sox manager Grady Little perform a gruesome public *seppuku* by failing to remove the selfsame Pedro from action in the eighth inning of the A.L.C.S. seventh-game finale, after successive hits by the Yankees. The Yanks tied the game on a bloop double by Jorge Posada, and won it—against a different pitcher—in the eleventh, on a lead-off, walk-off home run by Aaron Boone. Getting either or both of the Cubs and Red Sox into the World Series on their hallowed home fields had been a happy possibility nationally discussed and op-edded since July, and when the two teams were again dispatched winless into winter their fans were left with a last gnawing weirdness: both clubs had led by an identical three-run margin at a moment when they stood the same bare five outs away from a pennant, and both blew the chance.

Even as the World Series began, friends of mine were saying how much they mourned the absence of these famous losers in the finale. They'd yearned to see the sweet and accursed old teams have at each other in their grand old parks—a lore-off, so to speak. Part of me felt the same way, but when Juan Pierre, the speedy Marlins center fielder, touched off the first inning of the first Series game with an unplayable bunt, scooted to third on a single, and scored on a sacrifice fly, my mind began to clear. I didn't know this team, but their anonymity and lack of history suddenly felt like a gift. Most of the Yankees and Red Sox we'd been watching carried an almost visible weight of expectation and precedent and prior exploit or failure with them whenever they stepped up to the plate or delivered a pitch, and looked wearied by it; as the *Globe* columnist Dan Shaughnessy put it, the uniform had become too heavy. When Pierre came up to bat again in the fifth, with base runners on second and third, and rapped a little single to left, third baseman Aaron Boone cut off the peg to the plate, allowing the second run to score. Watching, you knew that Boone had glimpsed Pierre, or the *idea* of Pierre, whirling past first base, and wanted him stopped there. He'd given up the run—the winning run, as it turned out—because he was afraid of the next one, or a bunch more. Call it a forced mistake, and as I put the play into my scorecard I circled it, for elegance.

These wild-card Florida Marlins, who finished the regular season ten games behind the Atlanta Braves in the National League East, entered the postseason as an assemblage of attractive outsiders who'd posted the best record in their league since the beginning of June under a fresh manager, seventy-two-year-old Jack McKeon, called out of retirement to take the post early in May. With a lineup featuring the perpetual All-Star catcher Ivan Rodriguez; the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leggy and engaging twenty-one-year-old flinger Dontrelle Willis, who could start and finish games with equal ardor; and a twenty-year-old Venezuelan, Miguel Cabrera, up from double-A ball, at cleanup, the Marlins appeared elated by the odds against them, even when they fell behind. They didn't go away, in the parlance, but burned steadily and imperturbably through October, winning the last three games in a row in successive elimination series against the power of the Giants, the celebrated pitching of the Cubs, and now the Yankees—and with the last one, of course, the World Championship. Their closest call, you could say, came when the Giants' J. T. Snow, representing the tying run, charged frantically down the line toward home with two out in the ninth of the final Divisional game, and slammed into Rodriguez at home. The throw in from left field beat him by yards, and Pudge held onto the ball.

This was the second crown for the Marlins in seven years, but the new champs fielded only one player, third baseman Jeff Conine, who played for them in 1997—a returnee signed aboard this summer after interim stints with the Royals and the Orioles. The current owner, Jeffrey Loria, was allowed to buy the franchise two years ago, after epochal sufferings with his prior fief, the Montreal Expos. By consensus, most of the credit for the Marlins' sudden rise goes to some brilliant draft signings by the carryover general manager, Dave Dombrowski, who has since accepted the same post with the Tigers, and prior owner John Henry, who now owns the Red Sox, of all things. A uniting thread between these Marlins and the 1997 group—aside from chronic low attendance at steamy Pro Player Stadium, which was built for the N.F.L.'s Miami Dolphins—is that neither champion visited first place after April.

The upbeat Marlins will soon drop out of this account (we are following the Selig fantasy formula), but they leave behind a trail of bright images, including that of the expressionist lefty Dontrelle Willis—who appeared in five post-season relief turns and two starts—tilting and flailing like a reborn Goose Gossage, with his tongue stuck out and his excited eyes alight under that down-to-his-nose, flat-brim street-chic cap. In

Game Three, another outsized pitcher, the goat-bearded, sulky-faced Josh Beckett, struck out ten Yankees in seven and a third innings, amid tropic Miami showers, but was beaten by Derek Jeter's three hits for the night, the last a double up the right-field line, after a terrific mound duel against Mike Mussina. The win put the Yanks one up in the series, and when they rallied late the next night—this was Clemens's career-closing start—to carry the game into extra innings, and loaded the bases with one out in the eleventh, a customary Yankee outcome appeared at hand. They didn't deliver, and the winning Florida poke—a lead-off homer down the left-field line in the twelfth by shortstop Alex Gonzalez—bore such an uncanny resemblance to the Aaron Boone walk-off that had killed the Red Sox, days before, that it looked like a mistake in the screening room. Hey, hold it—wrong guys!

The Yankee offense, unreliable all season, was so creaky by now that Torre benched Jason Giambi and the wholly discombobulated Alfonso Soriano the next night—and shortly had to do without his starter, David Wells, who suffered back spasms after one inning's work and could not return. (Jolly in the interview room the day before, Boomer had boasted that he had a rubber arm and could leave the rigors of conditioning to other pitchers forever.) The Marlins' seven hits over the next four innings helped build the 6–4 win and the parvenus' second lead in the Series. The teams came back to the Stadium, where the Yankees win big games by force of habit, but they'd finished scoring for the year. The silencing 2–0 win delivered by Josh Beckett was the first Series-ending shutout suffered at home by the Yankees since Lew Burdette did it for the Milwaukee Braves, in 1957. The Marlins were outscored in the Series, and outhit, as well, but it had begun to be noticed by the irritated Yankee pitchers that most of those scores—nine of the latest twelve Florida runs, in fact—had come with two outs. Just when you thought you had them, you didn't. And here it happened again, with two down in the sixth: a bloop against Andy Pettitte by Gonzalez, a drive up the middle from Pierre, and Castillo's sliced mini-hit to right, to bring in the first run of the game—the only one required, it turned out. The peg from right had a

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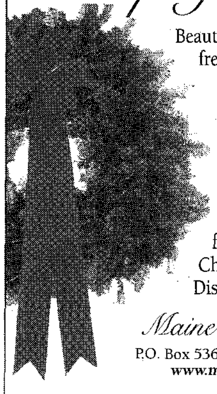

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chance, but the front runner, Gonzalez, came skidding past home on a slide that fell away from Posada's swipe, and he caressed the plate with his outstretched left hand as he flew by. Marlin-style ball, and a recognizable marque by now.

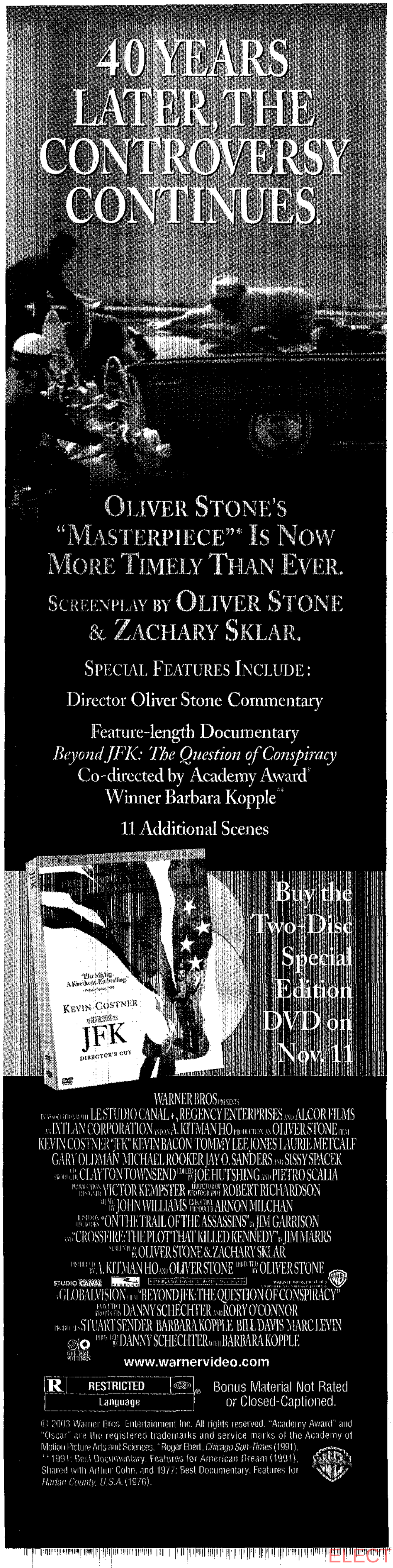
Beckett's opponent, Pettitte, was making his thirtieth post-season start here and his tenth in the World Series, but it was the younger man who looked suave and untroubled on this evening, jumping ahead in the counts and delivering ceaseless heat and late-moving curveballs in a thrilling, manner-free flow. He was in the mid-to-upper-ninety-m.p.h. range all night, and here and there edged higher. Beckett, who is twenty-three and six-five, has the contemptuous air of the overgifted athlete, but, having earned the sneer now—he'd added nine more strikeouts, and by the time he was done had surrendered but three runs in his last twenty-nine innings, along with two shutouts—he appeared to forgive us a little at the end. He holds an apprentice's 17–17 record for his three years in the majors to date, with a 9–8 won-lost record and a 3.04 earned-run average this season, when he had to sit out seven weeks with an inflamed elbow. "He's just starting to pitch," said the Florida utility infielder Mike Mordecai, shaking his head in awe. He compared Beckett to a teammate of his from a decade ago, the left-handed Atlanta phenom Steve Avery, but I had a better model in mind: twenty-one-year-old Bret Saberhagen, who gave up a lone run to the Cardinals over eighteen innings during the 1985 Series, and effortlessly won the M.V.P., just as Beckett did here. Watching them both, you could see Cooperstown in the mists ahead—or else the waiting rooms of Dr. James Andrews, the celebrated Birmingham shoulder surgeon, et al., which was Saberhagen's path, as it turned out. This is a tough trade.

Young players who win a championship are clueless about its rarity, but Jack McKeon, lighting a cigar in the corridor outside the champagne-damp Marlins clubhouse, knew what they'd accomplished. His fifty-five years in baseball include managerial tenures with four other major-league teams, and a decade as baseball-operations vice-president of the Padres, who made the World Series in 1984 but swiftly lost to the Tigers. Now he had that ring. McKeon grew up in South Amboy, New Jersey, but has acquired the skipperish, plainsman's mien, behind rimless glasses, that comes to so many elder baseball guys. In conversation before the finale, he and I had discussed the way that "seventy-two-year-old" prefix had become welded to his name these past weeks. "You notice that, too, I bet," he said, throwing an unexpected arm around my shoulder, "but, hell, this beats retirement. Never retire—right?" He'd been idle at home in Elon, North Carolina, when Marlins owner Loria came calling in May. McKeon said that he'd not minded the daylight hours at home, or the garden work, but hated what came afterward. "Sitting in the same damned chair till midnight, watching games," he said scornfully. "That used to be my working day."

I hope Jack McKeon saw the *Post* headline the day after he'd won, and is having it framed: "YANKEES SLEEP WITH THE FISH."

This October, the closeness of the post-season games and the sight of so many celebrity teams—A's, Yankees, Red Sox, Braves, Cubs, and Giants—suddenly fighting for their lives in the early rounds of play made these eliminations feel like a different sport altogether: baseball with a thirty-second clock. Counting the World Series, thirty-eight games were required to produce a champion, with eleven of them settled by one run, and six going into extra innings. The easy, almost endless run of summer ball was not just over but obsolete, and it requires effort to bring any part of it back, even the Mets. Place should be reserved, however, for the achievement of the switch-hitting Red Sox infielder Bill Mueller, who twice hit home runs from different sides of the plate in the same game. The second time he did this, against the home-team Texas Rangers, the dingers—first right-handed, then left—came in consecutive innings and were both grand slams. Never before—never *nearly* before.

For a single game, I will keep the drizzly, foggy evening of June 13th, at Yankee Stadium, when Roger Clemens, after failing in his three previous tries, at last nailed down his three-hundredth win. He was the twenty-first pitcher to enter this particular club, but on the same night also notched his four-thousandth lifetime strikeout, a level previously attained



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A WREATH

(After Yannis Ritsos)

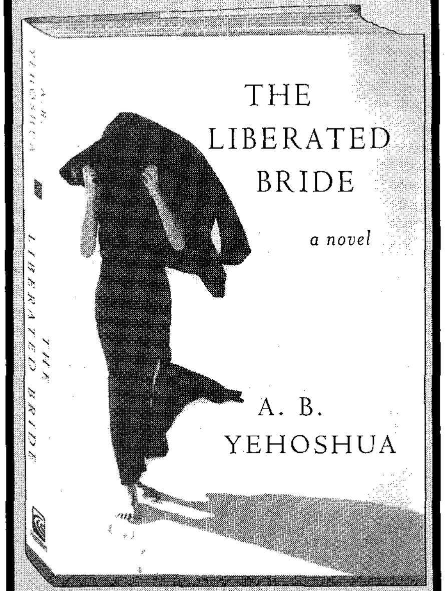
The leaves hid your face.
I cut them, to get near you.
When I'd cut the last one, you disappeared.
Then I made a wreath.
Who to give it to? No one.
So I put it on.

—*Ben Sonnenberg*

only by Nolan Ryan and and Steve Carlton. Clemens, who is forty-one, was retiring after this season, his twentieth, and he had wanted these certifications before the end. The landmark K was odd, because Roger had just given up a home run and a double to the previous Cardinal batters here in the second inning (it was an inter-league game) and because the cheers greeting the whiff, by shortstop Edgar Renteria, now began to blend with a welcome for the next batter, designated hitter Tino Martinez, an old Yankee hero making his first appearance at the Stadium since his departure two years ago. Tino, sensing the moment, stepped back to allow the Roger ovation to reach its full, 55,214-fan volume while the ball was being handed off to a ball boy like a Brinks package, and then at last got into the batter's box for his own "TI-NO! TI-NO! TI-NO!" Nothing came easily on this night, in fact, in a game that repeatedly threatened to be delayed or wiped out by rain, or even won by the wrong team, until a two-run homer by Raul Mondesi in the seventh brought the score to 5–2 Yankees, and safety. Clemens had departed in the top of the same inning (he struck out ten batters) but came back onto the field after the final out, while the scoreboard played Elton John's "Rocket Man" and the fans flashed their digital cameras and wept. Clemens hugged his catcher, Jorge Posada; hugged his other teammates and coaches; hugged the Yankee P.R. honcho, Rick Cerrone; hugged his wife, Debbie; hugged his sons, Koby, Kory, Kacy, and Kody; hugged the ballpark.

I am not big on lifetime records, but this three-hundredth win changed Clemens and changed the fans' view of him as well. Almost from the beginning of his career, he has been an enigmatic presence in the clubhouse and in mid-action—a tree in the living room, a dangerous object left on the highway. There have been six Cy Young Awards and those two epochal twenty-strikeout games, ten years apart, and also the fugues: his early ejection from a League Championship start in 1990 for muttered curses on the mound; his nailing Mike Piazza with a fastball on the side of the helmet in 2000; and its sequel, the flung-bat-stump mystery in the World Series that same fall. But now and for the rest of this season Clemens became calmer on the mound and less mumbly or Esperantoid with the media. Planet Roger had produced a sunset. "Since the three hundred he's not so hard on himself all the time," Joe Torre said. "It's like he's come through something and out the other side." Clemens was not less of a pitcher, however, keeping a live fastball (and that Kilroy stare-in at the batter over the fence of his glove) and going 17–9 for the season, with a hundred and ninety (or 4,099) strikeouts, fifth best in the league. He also won two huge starts in the post-season—the third game against the Twins in the Divisionals, which put his team in command at last, and that roily Game Three in Boston, where he stood cool amid the schoolyard punchings and pushings. He wanted to stay useful, and did so, besting his duellist Pedro in every category in his six innings and coming off with the win.

The Sox fans taunted Clemens all that afternoon, but I believe they still remembered his last local appearance, at the end of August, his hundredth victory in this old park, when he'd come out of the game after seven, a winner once again, and received a substantial, echoing "O" from the width and breadth of



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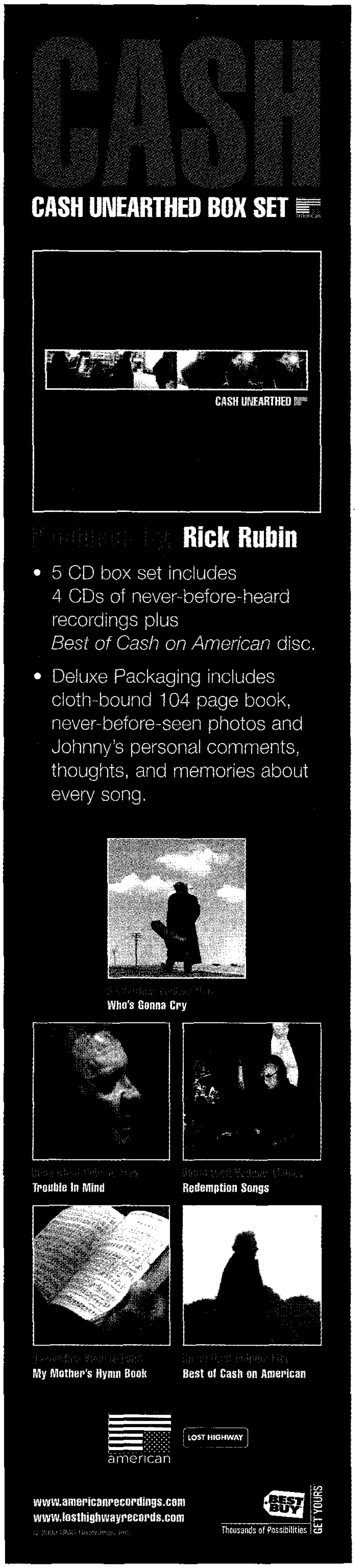
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the Fenway multitudes, who had loved him here in his celebrated thirteen-year tenure and foully vilified him ever since.

Some writers and television sports guys have been saying that Roger won't stay retired—he'll miss it all too much—and I just hope they'll bring their money around, come spring. I think they're the ones who don't want to say goodbye. "I'm dead serious on what I'm doing," Clemens said in Florida. "I'm pretty set on it." This was about his departure, but it fits a career as well.

At two-thirty-seven in the morning, Steve Wulf, a Red Sox fan who is also the executive editor of *ESPN: The Magazine*, was alone in the living room of his house in Larchmont watching on television the first game of the Sox-Athletics American League Divisional playoff from Oakland. The A's had loaded the bases in the bottom of the twelfth inning when catcher Ramon Hernandez dropped down a killer bunt, to bring home the winning run. "Fuck," Wulf said to himself, turning off the set—and heard the same summarizing blurt softly repeated from above by his wife, Bambi, who had long since gone to bed, and, still more faintly, by their seventeen-year-old son, Bo, on the top floor. Here was a harbinger, the first leaf of another hard Bosox autumn ahead—eleven more games of breathless and mindless, heroic and incomprehensible ball, ending in a fresh seismic shock to the Red Sox Nation, by consensus the worst one of all. I was at Fenway Park for most of the action, but cannot offer a reliable summary—certainly not of the Divisional third game, which featured a collective six errors and several base-running grotesqueries by the visitors.

Scrolling ahead, we alight in Game III, Scene 4 of the next series, the A.L.C.S., at Fenway Park, just as Pedro Martinez lets fly that fastball aimed behind Yankee batter Karim Garcia, grazing him high on the left shoulder as he flinches away. Vintage Pedro or something, but there's no doubt about his intention. Handed a two-run first-inning lead against Roger Clemens, Martinez has given back a run in the second, then a solo homer to Jeter, and, just now, a walk and a single and an R.B.I. double to Hideki Matsui. The Yankees lead, and will hold on to win, despite chaotic distractions. When play resumes, Garcia bangs irritably into second baseman Todd Walker at the front of a double play, and in the ensuing pushing and grabbing, Martinez glares at Jorge Posada in the Yankee dugout and aims a finger at his own forehead: you're next! After the teams change sides Manny Ramirez comes out at Clemens, bat upraised, in response to an eye-level pitch that was actually over the plate. ("If I'd wanted it near him he'd have known it," Clemens said later.) Benches and bullpens empty, old Zimmer swings at Martinez and goes down—what was *that*?—and will be taken away tenderly as the players at last disperse and the umps confer. Later, there's a mini-fracas in the Yankee bullpen, where reliever Jeff Nelson and right fielder Garcia (vaulting the fence to get there) get into a street scuffle with a Red Sox employee. This game had been billed as a classic between the best pitcher of his day and the best of his era, but turned into low farce.

The next day, a rainy Sunday, Zimmer wept and apologized, fines were assessed (fifty thousand to Martinez on down to five thousand for Zimmer), and the Red Sox management, defying a team-silence edict from the commissioner's office, staged an embarrassing press conference while attempting to put a Sox spin on the debacle. "This is a band of brothers," explained chief executive officer Larry Lucchino. Fra Pedro, whose team's record had just gone to 9–15 in games he'd started against the Yankees, dismissed Zimmer's apology but offered none of his own. "It's not a good feeling to have to apologize," he said. "I don't know if you realize this." With a 14–4 record and a 2.22 E.R.A. this year, Martinez is not exactly in decline, but after this weekend you had the sense that even in the stoniest New England precincts he will no longer be defined by his numbers. In his *Globe* column, Dan Shaughnessy wrote, "Pedro was an embarrassment and a disgrace to baseball Saturday. . . . And the

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Sox front office enables him, just as they do Manny Ramirez. Just as they did with Roger when he was here and Yaz when he was here and Ted when he was here."

Don Zimmer, who has retired, deserves at least a footnote, here at the end of one of those "Glory of Their Times" baseball careers. His fifty-five years in the game included a marriage (it's still going) at home plate at Elmira when he was a young infielder in the Eastern League; a dozen years in the majors, with five different teams; and a manager's post with four more, including the Red Sox. Just this past season, he turned up in a dazzling new baseball trivia question, in good company. Q. Name four guys who were ejected from major-league games in six different decades. A. Casey Stengel. Leo Durocher. Frank Robinson. Zimm.

It comes to a seventh game—could anyone have doubted it? This will be the twenty-sixth time the Red Sox and Yankees have faced off this year—a record for any two teams in the annals—and while there have been stretches when the latest renewal held all the drama of a couple of cellmates laying out a hand of rummy, this is another killer dénouement. For all we know, it's up there with the 1978 Bucky Dent playoff and the DiMaggio late return of 1949. There's a wired, non-stop holiday din at the Stadium, which dies away only with the first intensely watched pitches. Everything matters now. Clemens is back and so is Pedro—but this Roger appears frail and thought-burdened. The No. 2 Boston batter, Todd Walker, raps a safe knock after a ten-pitch at-bat, and Nomar Garciaparra lines out hard to right. An inning later, Kevin Millar singles, and Trot Nixon, from his flat-footed left-handed stance, delivers a businesslike homer into the stands in right: his third two-run job in the post-season. With two out, the bearded, dad-like Jason Varitek doubles into the right-field corner. Johnny Damon's grounder looks like the last out but—*geez!*—third baseman Enrique Wilson mishandles the ball and his throw pulls first baseman Nick Johnson off the bag, as Varitek turns the corner and scores. It's 3–0, and when the teams change sides the Stadium has gone anxious and pissed-off conversational: fans up and down the stuffed tiers complaining to their seatmates or sending the bad news home on their cells, with gestures: . . . *plus Wilson is in for defense, right?* . . . *Our only chance was stay close to goddam Pedro.*

Martinez, for his part, survives some first-inning wobbles and is soon in rhythm: the stare-in from behind his red glove, the velvety rock and turn, and the strikes arriving in clusters. After each out, he gloves the returning ball backhand, and gazes about with lidded hauteur. No one else in the world has eyes so far apart. The Yanks go down quickly again, and we're at the top of the fourth—and the startling sound, it's like a tree coming apart, of Kevin Millar's solo shot up into the upper-deck left-field stands. Clemens, down 4–0 and almost helpless, gives up a walk and a hit-and-run single to Mueller and departs, maybe for the last time ever. A ten-year-old Yankee fan I know named Noah has by this time gone down on his knees on the concrete in front of his seat near first base, hiding his head.

There were Sox fans here, too, of course—you could see them in red-splashed knots and small parties around the Stadium, and pick up their cries. The Boston offense had been a constant for them all year, including the sixteen-hit outburst in the series-tying 9–6 win the night before. This year, the Sox set major-league records for extra bases, total bases, and slugging percentage. The Boston front office, headed by the twenty-nine-year-old G.M., Theo Epstein, had traded vigorously to build a batting order with no soft sectors or easy outs in it. Mueller, the double-grand-slam switch-hitter, was batting eighth today. For me, Kevin Millar, a free agent acquired for cash from the Marlins last winter, was the genius pick. On April 1st, the second day of the season, he contributed a sixteenth-inning game-winning home run in Tampa, and in June pinch-hit a grand slam that helped pull off a seven-run turnabout against the Brewers. With his blackened cheekbones and raunchy grin, he became the model for the Sox' newfound grunginess—dirt-stained uniforms and pine-smudged helmets, and an early-October outburst of shaved heads that transformed sluggers and pitchers and old coaches into plebes or pledges. His "Let's cowboy up!" rallying cry from the dugout and the on-deck circle caught on with d.j.s and schoolkids and Green Line subway riders, inundating Greater Boston in "Cowboy Up!" caps and T-shirts and fan towels and diapers and souvenir glassware. Somebody found a clip of eighteen-year-old Kevin mouthing the lyrics to Bruce Springsteen's "Born in the U.S.A." in a Beaumont, Texas, karaoke solo, which became a staple on the Fenway message board. The unimaginable had happened: the Sox were loose.

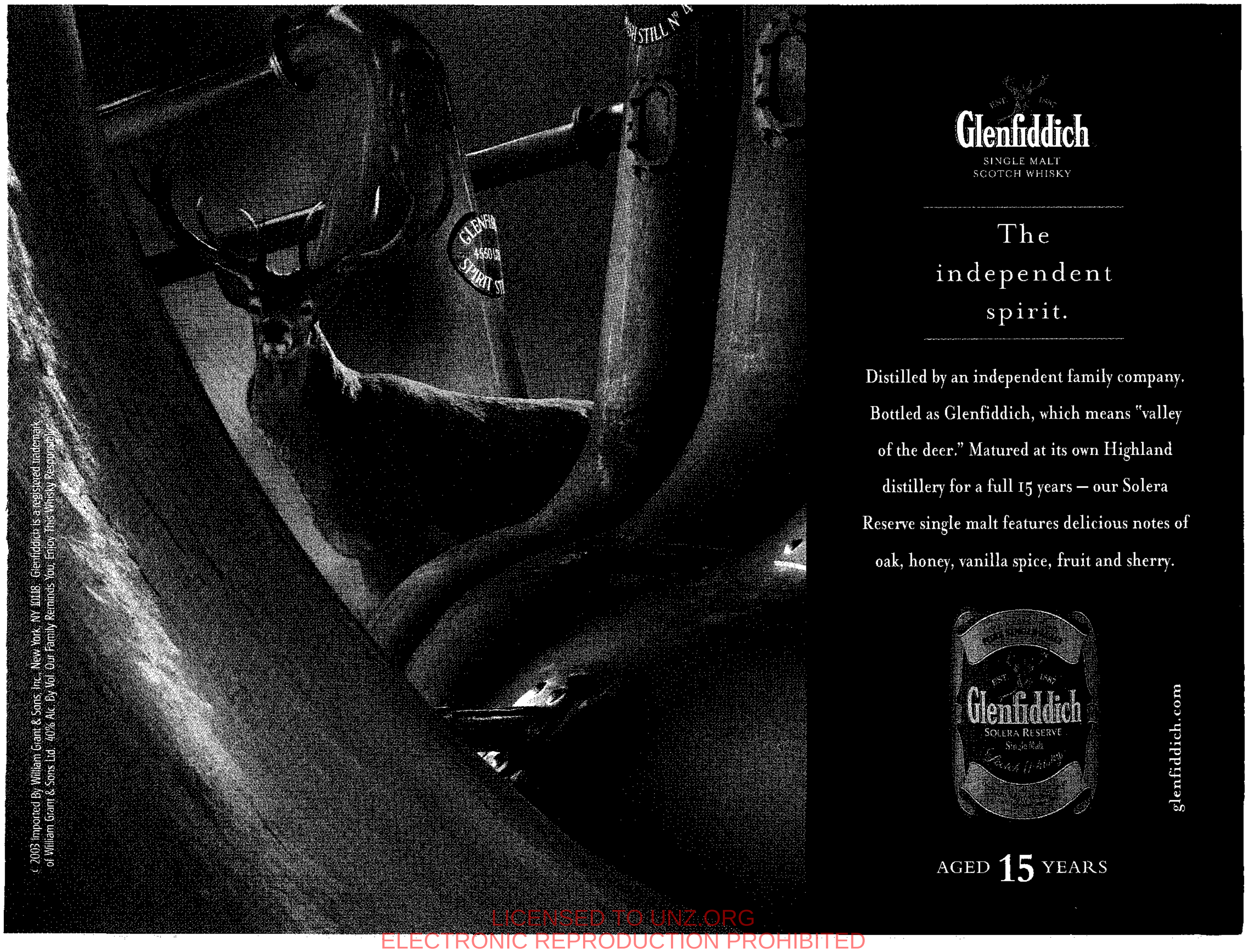
Mike Mussina, called into the crisis

with Boston runners at first and third, and no outs—Clemens had just gone—went into his ceremonial low-bowing stretch and struck out Varitek, the first batter, on three pitches. Three more brought a handy 6-6-3 double play at Damon's expense. "MOOOOSE!" the bleacherites cried. It was Mussina's first relief appearance after four hundred lifetime starts, but he understood the work. Jason Giambi, struggling at .190 in the series, hit a homer barely into the center-field seats, for a first dent in Pedro, and, liking the range, did it again to the same sector in the seventh, bringing us to 4–2, with the old house roaring and rocking. The press-box floor thrummed under my feet, as I had felt it do on an autumn late night or two before. Young Noah had lifted himself off the deck by this time and stood by his seat, yelling.

I had been looking about the familiar Stadium surround in valedictory fashion—the motel-landscape bullpens, the UTZ Potato Chip sign over in right—but from here to the end sat transfixed by the cascade of events, scarcely able to draw a full breath. No other sport does this, and even as we stare and cry "Can you believe this?" we forget how often it comes along, how it's built into baseball.

Joe Torre, patching in relievers after Mussina's three-inning stint, produced David Wells, whose first pitch was sailed deep into the bleachers by Sox d.h. David Ortiz. 5–2 now. Checking the video monitor, I saw Wells's top teeth hit his bottom lip with the expletive. But Pedro had been long at his tasks, and when Jeter doubled to the right-field corner in the eighth and was singled home by Bernie Williams, the margin narrowed again to two, and here came manager Grady Little, out to hook his ace and pat him on the rump as he left. Little likes to stand below a pitcher, on the downslope of the mound, and here again, looking up at Pedro like a tourist at the Parthenon steps, he said a few words and walked away. This could not be. Martinez had thrown a hundred and fifteen pitches, and given up ringing hits to five of the last seven batters. A Sox-fan friend of mine, Ben, watching in his apartment on West Forty-fifth Street, had gone on his hands and knees, screaming. But Pedro stayed on: a ground-rule double by Matsui, then the dying bloopy double by Posada that landed untouched out beyond second base, for two runs and the tie. "There's a lot of grass out there," Posada explained later. Grady Little, in his own brief post-game, said, "Pedro Martinez has been our man all year long, and in situations like that he's the one we want on the mound," which was understandable but untrue. This had been only the fifth game in thirty-one starts in which Martinez was allowed to pitch into the eighth.

It was Mariano Rivera time—the waiting Boston bad dream—and Mo, defending the tie, poised and threw, poised and threw, whisking through the ninth. There was a scary double to left by Ortiz with two gone in the tenth, but Rivera, sighing, delivered the cutter to Millar, who lined gently to Jeter. Midnight had come and gone, but the Yankees could do no better against Embree



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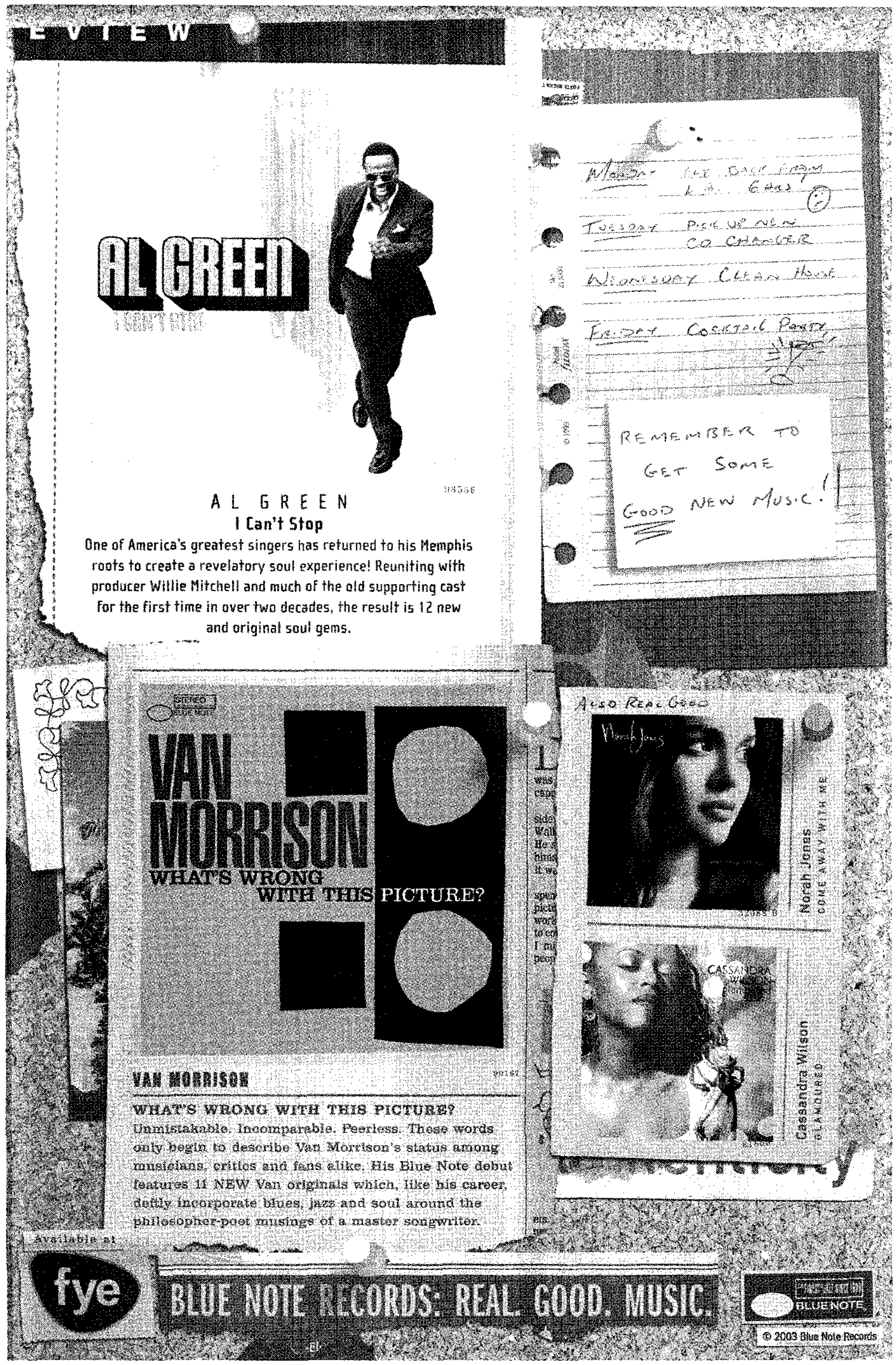

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and then Timlin, the tough Sox relievers Grady Little had slighted in extremis (the two surrendered no runs at all in this series, in sixteen-plus combined innings). The top of the eleventh went away, to noisy, exhausted accompaniments; the latest Boston pitcher was Tim Wakefield, the tall knuckleballer who had embarrassed the Yankees with his spinless stuff, twice beating Mussina in close, low-scoring games. Mo was done: the balance had swung the other way. I looked at my scorecard to confirm the next Yankee batter—Aaron Boone, who had come into the game as a pinch-runner in the eighth—looked back, and saw the ball and the ballgame fly away on his low, long first-pitch home run into the released and exulting and rebelieving Yankee crowds. I yelled, too, but thought, Poor Boston. My God.

News and reviews of this game poured in even while the World Series was cranking up. A woman I know, riding a late taxi downtown that night with a friend, was stopped at a light at Twenty-third Street and Seventh Avenue when she heard the earphoned, Urdu-speaking driver suddenly shouting "Aaron Boone! Aaron Boone!" A man in the Abbey Tavern, around the corner from the Piazza Navona in Rome, turned to say something consoling to a new Sox-fan acquaintance after the Boone homer—it was six-fifteen in the morning—and found the seat empty. In Gramercy Square, light from his home TV screen illuminated the patrician visage of eighty-six-year-old Gardner Botsford, a retired editor and writer who was wearing the first messaged garment of his life, a classic white cotton T-shirt, with "Yankees Suck" in 75-point blue capitals. Botsford is no Red Sox fan, but his shirt, the gift of a friend just back from Fenway Park, summed up his convictions: Voltaire could not have put it better. When Boone had done his deed, Botsford took off the shirt and went upstairs. "Didn't work," he said to the silent form across the bed. Eighteen-year-old Pat Sviokla had asked a bunch of friends and classmates over to watch the game at his house in Newton, outside Boston, but when Boone's shot went out the party disappeared. "Nobody said a word," Pat's mother, Eileen, said later. "Six or seven of them going out the door, single file. They looked like

P.O.W.s." Bill Buckner letting the ground ball go through his legs at Shea Stadium had happened in 1986, when these young men were one-year-olds. Bucky Fucking Dent, Joe Morgan, Jim Willoughby taken out, and Throw the ball in, Johnny, was stuff their fathers and grandfathers talked about. Now they belonged.

Much of the buzz collected around Grady Little. "Grady *Sutton* is a better manager than Grady Little" was the gist and entire content of a note I had from an unknown correspondent—who'd somehow realized that I would recognize Grady Sutton as the moonfaced ninny in the old W. C. Fields flicks. "Grady Little is the George Bush of managers," a friend across the hall from me in my office came by to announce. "Letting Pedro stay in is like George Bush staring into Putin's soul."

Now, a month later, a little of New England's pain and anguish may have dispersed, helped along by the Yankees' loss in the World Series and that late footage of Derek Jeter, still with his cap and spikes and wristbands on, sitting disconsolate in front of his Stadium locker a full hour after the Yanks' elimination.

Grady Little has been let go, and the Red Sox have offered waivers on Manny Ramirez, hoping to trade him and his twenty-million-dollar-a-year contract for new pitching. If you want to tap into the Sox fans' psyche now, you have to consult a new Web site, www.redsoxhaiku.com, where it comes in eloquent triplets:

Bright leaves falling. Clear
Blue sky. Frost at dawn. Autumn.
Red Sox lose again.

Or:

Buckner or Little
It doesn't really matter
Someone will fuck up

And:

Hey, wait till next year:
Every eighty-six years
Like clockwork. Go Sox.

Joe Torre, who called the Red Sox the best team his Yankees had faced during his eight-year tenure as manager, was short of a haiku by a beat or two in the interview room just before that seventh game, but also on target: "This really is fun, but you don't know it's fun until it's over." ♦

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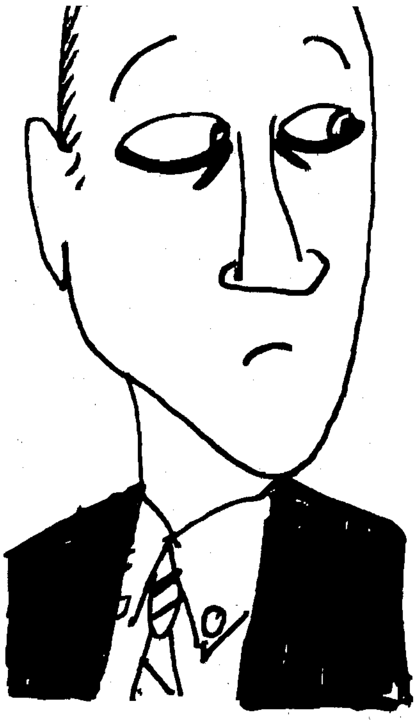
CLASS NOTES

BY IAN FRAZIER

Jack "Spicer" Conant tells us that when he was in Houston recently on a business trip he put in a call to Houstonite and classmate **Chuck Gales**, but Chuck didn't call back.

Jim Carmichael writes that he happened to see **Marc Weinstein** in the Salt Lake City airport not long ago and pretended not to recognize him.



JULES FEIFFER

Out of the blue the other day, **Bill Tolan** says, he realized he had forgotten the names of **Marty Glimer**, **Todd Saalsten**, and **Andy Camp**. A quick glance at our yearbook refreshed his memory.

Anne (Patterson) Simms asks, "What in the world was I thinking of, going out with **Mike Stack**?" Don't know, Annie—but are you sure his name wasn't **Russ**?

Arthur Stancik never liked **Jim McMickens**, and hasn't seen him in years.

From rainy Seattle, **Alex Kostygian** sends a note inquiring about "the name of the **skinny black guy** who was in our class for a few weeks at the beginning of sophomore year and then dropped out." Sorry we can't help you with that, Alex!

Fuadh Akmed Muhammad says he now can't believe he ever went to school here.

Though **Geoff Emery** sat next to **Hotch Engleman** at every assembly for four years, today he can't bring his face to mind.

Mariah Miller told **Judith (Mandelbaum) Giles** and **Lacie (Stone) McCarthy** she'd love to have lunch, but doesn't get into the city that often. Judith, or maybe Lacie, had just returned from Italy.

Benjamin Kaplan, recently downsized, wonders why he should donate money to a school he can't afford to send his own children to. Ben, you've got us there!

When **Marylin Cho** saw **Tony Lemire's** name on her caller I.D. last summer, she let the machine pick up. Her daughter, **Sophie** ('06), later erased the message by mistake.

Gus Trebonyek and **Ted Antrim**, who lived just one floor apart in Brainard junior and senior years, never met once during that entire time. Gus went on to a career in law, and Ted eventually became a consultant with a management firm. Ted moved to far-off Anchorage, Alaska. Gus, meanwhile, settled into a successful practice as a litigator in Detroit. Finally, as middle-aged men with wives and families, both Ted and Gus came back for the twenty-fifth reunion, where again their paths did not cross. They still don't know each other from Adam.

A luncheon buffet and cash bar at the Westin Hotel gave class members in the San Francisco area a chance for catching up and reminiscing last month. **Spencer Beale**, who attended, reports that nobody there looked at all familiar, and he thinks he might have been in the wrong room.

Wasn't **Kay Fortunaro** a number, with those tight sweaters she used to wear? Well, turns out that was someone else. A misidentification of a photo in our Class Register is to blame.

The secretary of **Fisk Pettibone** passes along the welcome news that "of course he remembers [us]" and will drop us a note when he has time.

MOVIN' ON: Often, mail sent to classmates returns unopened, but with a little sleuthing we discovered that **Melanie Ostroff** hasn't lived at the address we have for her since 1985! The house, a two-bedroom Colonial, belonged to her parents, who bought it in the sixties and have since died. The current residents went to public schools.

Mitchell DiMario, **Sallie Stark**, **Chris Feinstock**, **Joel Bushwell**, and **Will "Thirsty" Tabor** all rented cars for business travel on weekends within the past year, thus qualifying for certain perks and discounts. They may meet to talk about this next fall.

Bruce Dunlop couldn't pick **Tim Brandt**, **Roger Magnuson**, or **Larry Bollardi** out of a police lineup today. He hasn't a clue what became of them, or whether he might have confused them with some guys he used to hang out with at a summer camp in Maine.

Guy Forstman says he left **Rick Kelling's** business card in the pocket of a suit that's at the cleaners, or possibly in a drawer at the office. Guy is sure it will turn up.

On the way to a sales appointment recently, **Bob Halmer** drove right by the campus. Though going fairly fast, he appeared to look much the same.

Cecily Spaeth-McCorkle makes more than any of her former teachers, according to a newsy e-mail she sent from the South of France.

Married the week after graduation, classmates **Alison Stammel** and **Randy Tinsley** divorced acrimoniously long ago. Both report that they are better off.

Wilson Yoshida very rarely thinks about anything having to do with his past, and throws away all letters or circulars bearing the school's return address. Wilson was the 2002 recipient of a "no-limits" checking account.

Lyle Kerner simply disappeared.

McMurdo Station, a lonely research outpost in Antarctica near the South Pole, has to be the last place on earth where you'd expect to run into your roommate from sophomore year. If anyone ever does, please write or call with details.

We have received the following from **Katie (Cole) Shearwood**, firing off a missive in the midst of her busy schedule: "Hello, all! As we formerly youthful (don't remind me!) friends and classmates wend our way closer to codger-hood, I can't help but sit back and wonder. What I'll be when I grow up is still up for grabs, though perhaps less so now than ever before. In '99 I left my longtime job as a group vice-president responsible for more than eight hundred people in a pre-public biotech company dealing with infrastructure issues—enjoyed the work, but felt a change was due—and founded KatieCorp, my own firm handling on-demand biosecurity auditing and database vulnerability analysis. Who would've guessed? I absolutely love it, and only regret that I didn't make the change weeks earlier. Plus, as an added bonus, I met my current spouse/partner/best friend/severest critic/terrific lover, Dennie Strube. (Dennie Shearwood, my ex, is history, though we remain good friends, and I kept his name.) I quickly had three children to add to my previous two and his four, and before we knew it all had left for colleges and graduate schools, where they are doing fine. I remain very concerned about the state of our nation and the world. As a new empty-nester, I find I have more time to think about what I, as a generation, have accomplished for right (and wrong). The success of KatieCorp, whose factories are now in Suriname and run themselves, causes me to look for new challenges. When I see my face in the mirror in the morning, peering between the lines for the hopeful young person I once was, I say, 'Katie—,' and then I tell myself various things. I've had to juggle so much (I'm with a small local circus here in Montreal) and yet I still get up every morning eager for what the day will bring, and no man I'd care to drink with would do otherwise."

Does anybody have any idea who Katie was? ♦

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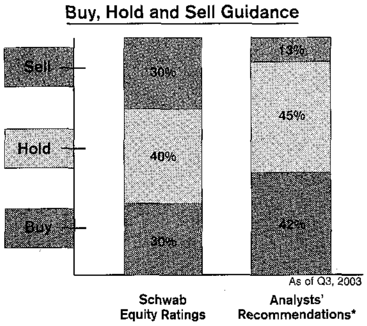

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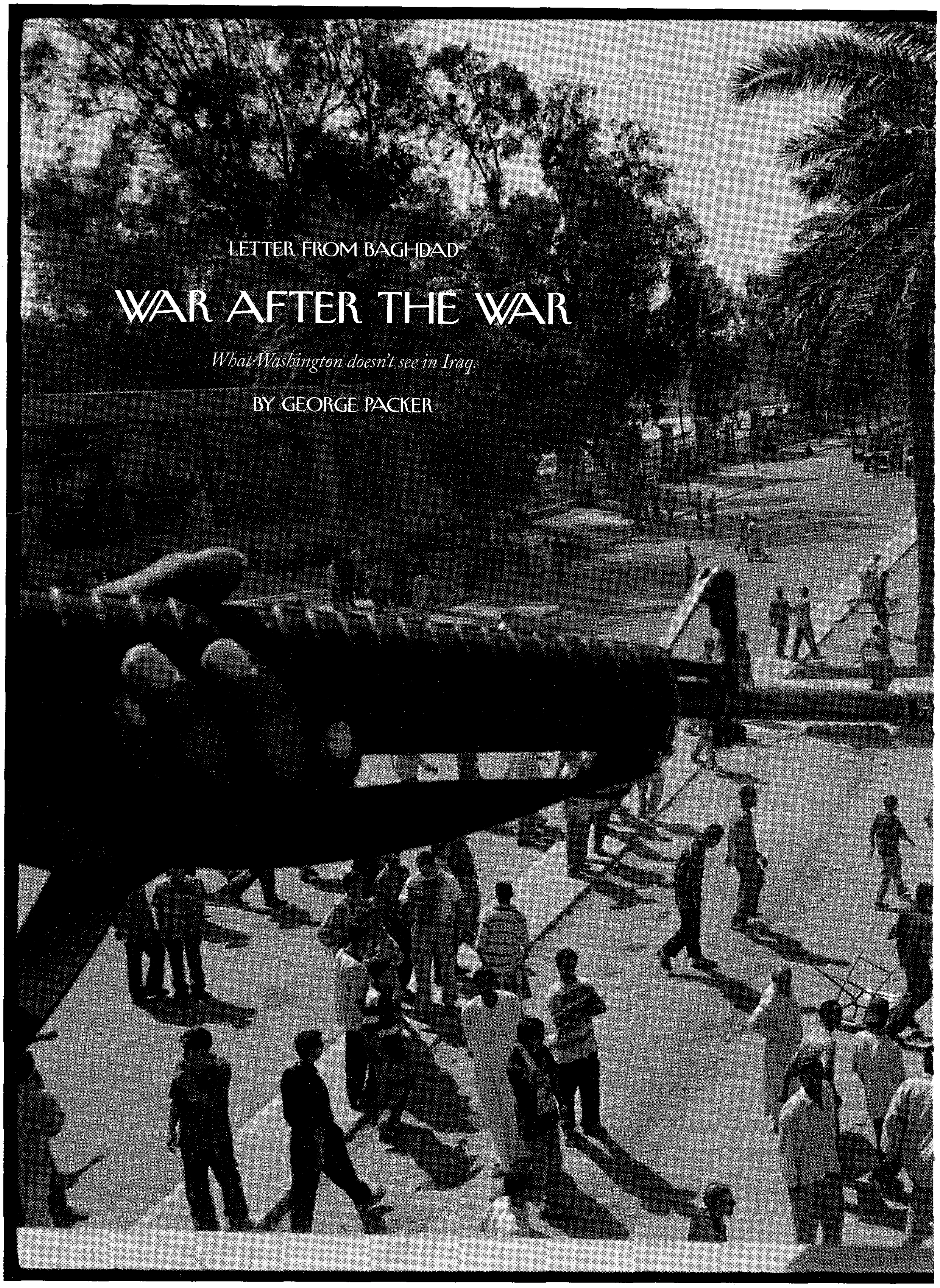
LETTER FROM BAGHDAD

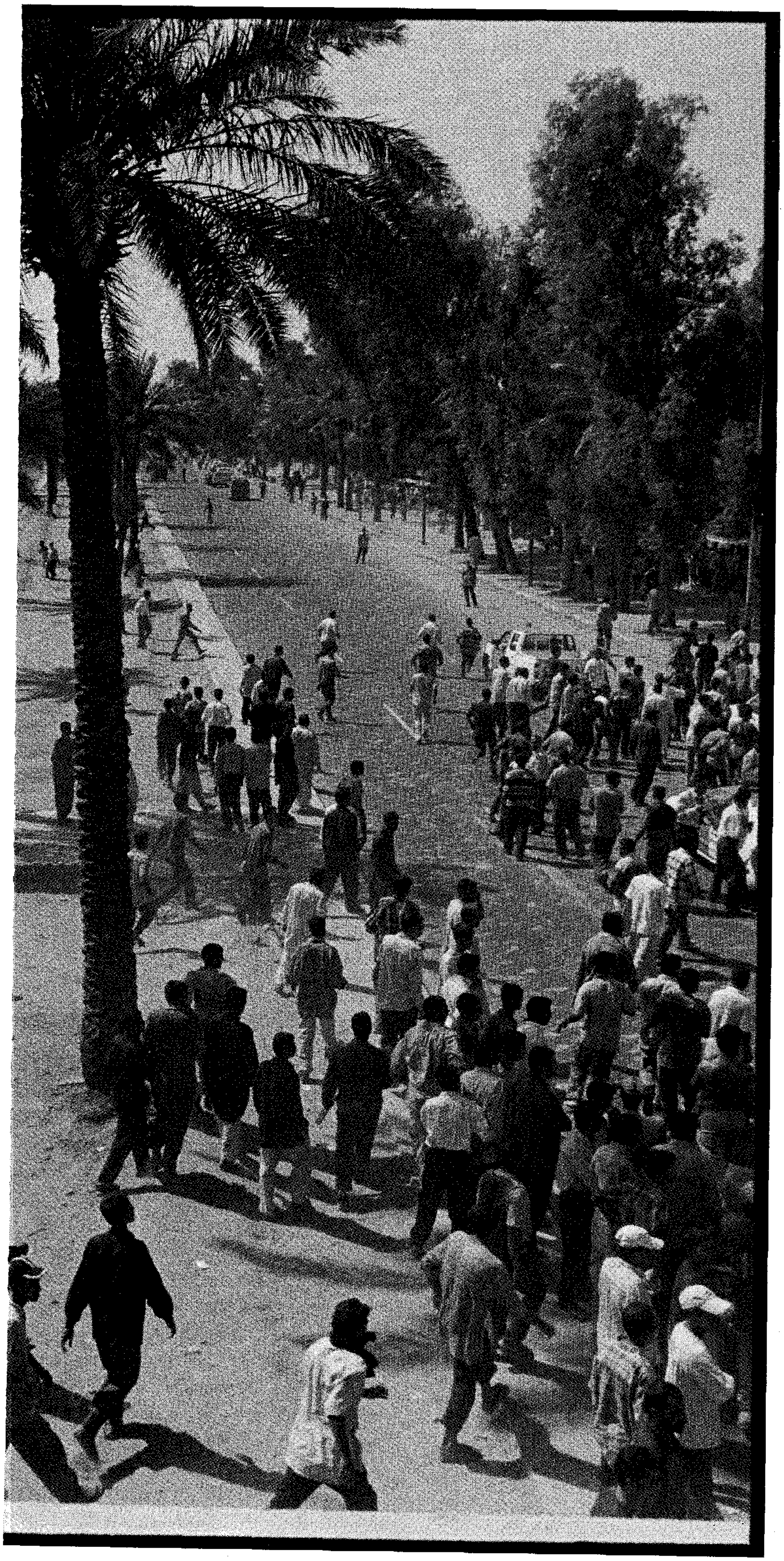
WAR AFTER THE WAR

What Washington doesn't see in Iraq.

BY GEORGE PACKER



PHOTOGRAPHS BY GILLES PERESS *Under the watch of an American soldier, young Iraqis gather in the Al Mansour distric*



ghdad. The decision to abolish the Iraqi Army put unemployed men with guns on the street.

In the shade of a high sandstone arch, a Bradley Fighting Vehicle and a platoon of American soldiers from the 1st Armored Division guard the main point of entry into Baghdad's Green Zone, the heavily fortified area west of the Tigris River from which the Coalition Provisional Authority governs occupied Iraq. The arch was built a few years ago by Saddam Hussein, in imitation of ancient gates that once protected Baghdad from Persian invaders. American soldiers now call it the Assassin's Gate.

Early each morning, before the sun grows dangerous, crowds of Iraqis gather at the Assassin's Gate. Some are job-seekers, others are protesters carrying banners: "PLEASE REOPEN OUR FACTORIES," "WE WISH TO SEE MR. FRAWLEY." Demonstrators bring their causes here and sometimes turn into rioters. People hand out lists naming family members executed by Saddam's regime or carry letters addressed to L. Paul Bremer III, the top civilian administrator in Iraq. With the old order overthrown, the Baath Party authorities purged, and the ministries stripped bare by looters, most Iraqis don't know where to take their grievances and petitions, where to unload the burden of their personal histories. So, like supplicants to the Caliph of ancient Baghdad, they bring them directly to the front gate of the occupation. But few Iraqis have the credentials to enter the Green Zone, and there are few, if any, interpreters at the gate. The Iraqis stand on one side of coils of concertina wire, gesturing and trying to explain why they must get in; on the other side stand American soldiers in body armor, doing twelve-hour shifts of checkpoint duty, keeping them out.

One day in July, a tiny woman in a salmon-colored veil stepped out of the crowd and thrust a handwritten letter at me. She was a schoolteacher, about thirty, with glasses and thick white face powder and an expression so pointedly solemn that she might have been a mime performing grief. Her letter, which was eighteen pages long, requested an audience with "Mister respectable, merciful American ambassador Pawal Bramar." It contained a great deal of detailed advice on the need to arm the Iraqi people so that they could help fight against the guerrilla resistance. The teacher, who was well under five feet tall, wanted permission to carry an AK-47 and work alongside

American soldiers against "the beasts" who were trying to restore Saddam or bring Iranian-style oppression. She had drawn up a fake gun permit to illustrate her desire. She was having trouble sleeping, she said, and had all but stopped eating.

A man with a cane hobbled over from the line. His left hand, wrapped in a bandage, was missing the thumb. He explained to the teacher in Arabic that he had been paralyzed in a car accident while fleeing Kuwait at the end of the Gulf War, and that at some point he had lost the piece of paper entitling him to hospital care. Now that the Americans were in charge, he felt emboldened to ask for another copy—and so he had come to the Assassin's Gate. The man, unshaven and wretched-looking, began to cry. The teacher told him not to be sad, to trust in God, and to speak with the American soldiers at the checkpoint. He shuffled back into line.

"Please, sir, can you help me?" the teacher continued. "I must work with Americans, because my psychology is demolished by Saddam Hussein. Not just me. All Iraqis. Psychological demolition."

THE HISTORIAN

The Coalition Provisional Authority, or C.P.A., is headquartered in the Republican Palace, about a mile beyond the Assassin's Gate, down a road of eucalyptus trees, past bombed state buildings and concrete barriers. The palace, protected by a high iron gate and sandbagged machine-gun positions, is a sprawling two-story office building in the Babylonian-Fascist style favored by Saddam, with Art Deco eagles spanning the doorways. Evenly spaced along the top of the façade are four identical twenty-foot gray busts of Saddam, staring straight ahead, his eyes framed by an imperial helmet. Beneath these Ozymandian tributes, twelve hundred officials of the C.P.A. go about the business of running the country. Getting in to see one of them, a senior adviser to Bremer acknowledged, "is like a jailbreak in reverse." Though it is in the geographical heart of ochre-colored, crumbling Baghdad, the C.P.A. sits in deep isolation. There are legitimate security reasons for this: on November 4th, the compound was hit by mortar fire, and four people were injured.

The Republican Palace is lavishly paved in marble and granite, with mirrored alcoves, gilded faux-Louis XIV furniture, and, in one vast domed room, murals of Scud missiles and the Al Aqsa mosque in a Jerusalem without Jews. Along a second-floor corridor is the office of the C.P.A.'s advisers to the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research. After the overthrow of the Saddam regime, a thirty-six-year-old American, Andrew P. N. Erdmann, who has a doctorate in history from Harvard, became Iraq's acting Minister of Higher Education.

Drew Erdmann is a rangy, broad-shouldered former rower with a strong chin and short sandy hair parted in the middle; when I met him during a month's stay in Iraq, he had a bushy mustache that turned his face into that of a British colonial official circa 1925. His features and oarsman's physique, together with those double-barrelled middle initials, prepared me for a terse Anglophilic bureaucrat. Instead, Erdmann broods. He speaks in long, reflective sentences that are frequently interrupted by second thoughts and qualifications; he settles into a faster, more explosive rhythm when recounting something that angers him—often, his own conduct. He was getting just a few hours of sleep a night, sharing a cramped trailer on the grounds of the palace. By his own account, he was short-tempered and close to nervous exhaustion.

He had just returned from a meeting at which he'd tried not to humiliate a university president who asked what "operating budget" meant during the fifth or sixth discussion of the subject. Two weeks earlier, on the campus of Baghdad University, Jeffrey Wershow, a twenty-two-year-old soldier from Erdmann's security detail, had been shot dead at point-blank range while waiting for Erdmann to come out of another meeting. Wershow was the seventy-first American soldier in Iraq to have been killed since the overthrow of Saddam. Since then, attacks on coalition forces have doubled—to more than thirty a day—and grown more fierce, sometimes involving car bombs. More than a hundred and fifty soldiers have been killed during the first six months of the occupation, and some twenty-two hundred have been wounded.

I sought out Erdmann in part because his dissertation adviser had been Ernest May, an authority on historical analogies. I was interested in the analogies that Erdmann was carrying around in his head for his new job of nation-building: The British in colonial Iraq? The Americans in postwar Germany? Lying on a cot in the trailer and fiddling with a Swiss Army knife, his feet propped on an Army duffelbag, his desk littered with water bottles, empty packets of Meals Ready to Eat, and unread books on the Middle East, Erdmann flashed a self-mocking grin. "I can't think historically—there've been times when I

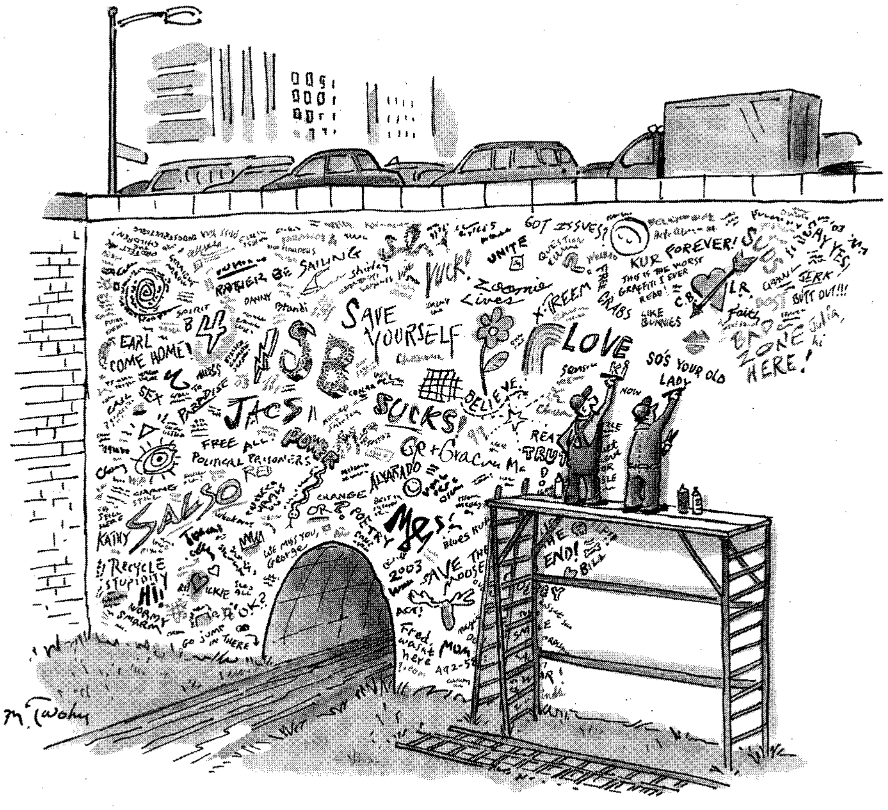
"I find that I don't need to hibernate as early if I wear a cardigan."

don't even know what I did forty-eight hours before," he said wryly. "I try. It's like a test for myself. Can I remember what I did the day before? I eventually can, but it takes effort. That's not a good situation. You should be able to remember what you did in the last twenty-four hours."

Hanging on the wall of Erdmann's office was a sign that reminded him of his mission. It read, "END STATE: A DURABLE PEACE FOR A UNITED AND STABLE, DEMOCRATIC IRAQ THAT PROVIDES EFFECTIVE AND REPRESENTATIVE GOVERNMENT FOR AND BY THE IRAQI PEOPLE; IS UNDERPINNED BY NEW AND PROTECTED FREEDOMS AND A GROWING MARKET ECONOMY; AND NO LONGER POSES A THREAT TO ITS NEIGHBORS OR INTERNATIONAL SECURITY AND IS ABLE TO DEFEND ITSELF."

Erdmann believed in this goal, but he was wary of the lofty rhetoric. One of his favorite books, which he was trying to find time to reread in Baghdad, is the French historian Marc Bloch's "Strange Defeat," a firsthand account of the collapse of France in 1940. Bloch served in the French Army in both world wars and then joined the Resistance before his capture, torture, and execution by the Nazis. Erdmann, in talking about his own efforts in Iraq, more than once cited a passage from "Strange Defeat": "The ABC of our profession is to avoid these large abstract terms in order to try to discover behind them the only concrete realities, which are human beings."

The ongoing debate over the war in Iraq has rarely moved beyond abstract terms to take into account the human beings—Iraqis and Americans alike—whose lives are affected by decisions in Washington. To Erdmann, success in Iraq will ultimately depend on the small, concrete actions of individuals on the ground. The psychological demands of the occupation were daunting, he said, and added, "Some people can navigate it, some people can't. Some people can make a mistake and recalibrate, others can't. On both sides." He paused. "So much of this is up to the wisdom of people—their prudence, their judgment."


RATHER BE SAILING
SAVE YOURSELF
YUCK!
UNITE
GOT ISSUES?
QUESTION
KUR FOREVER!
THIS IS THE WORST GRAFFITI I EVER READ!
C.B.
L.R.
BUTT OUT!!!
SAY YES
X-TREEM
FREE CRABS
LIKE BUNNIES
Zoomie Lives
EARL COME HOME!
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SO'S YOUR OLD LADY
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WORMY SMARMY
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Fred was here
MOM
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THE PLANNERS

Before arriving in Iraq, in April, Erdmann had done a lot of relevant historical thinking. In his dissertation, "Americans' Search for 'Victory' in the Twentieth Century," he wrote about Americans' growing realization that in a military intervention a careful transition from war to peace is as crucial as battlefield success. "The language that we live with today of 'exit strategy,' and the focus on the 'end game'—that's recent, and part of this historical evolution," he said.

Erdmann received his Ph.D. in 2000, and promptly abandoned an academic career. There is something self-punishing and obsessive in his character. A life spent analyzing military history would be insufficient; he was the sort of academic who had to know how he would do under fire. He wanted to be a good citizen more than a good professor.

In early 2001, Erdmann was about to fly to Kosovo and take the first job he could find—"Anything. Load bags of grain. That's how far away I wanted to get from academia"—when a call came from Richard N. Haass, who had just been named director of policy planning at the State Department. By May, Erdmann was in Washington, working for the Bush Administration. At Harvard, he had been an Eisenhower specialist, and he entered government in the old-fashioned spirit of a political independent. "This is a little too grandiose, but there is a previous tradition in foreign-policy circles of being more nonpartisan, serving the national interest," he said.

In the summer of 2002, when the Administration began leaning toward an invasion of Iraq, Haass asked Erdmann to analyze twentieth-century postwar reconstructions. In fifteen single-spaced classified pages—epic length for a State Department memo—Erdmann applied the ideas in his dissertation to a series of case studies from the two world wars through more recent conflicts such as Bosnia and Kosovo. One of Erdmann's fundamental conclusions was that long-term success depended on international support. In the short run, he explained to me one evening, "the foundation of everything is security," which partly depended on having sufficient numbers of troops. "You don't have to look too far to see that isn't the case here. And I don't fault the people who are here. There's no way any fault should be put on the kids in the 3rd I.D. or the brigade commanders. The question is, why weren't more people put in? That was the concern of my project—were we prepared to do what it took in the postwar phase?"

Last fall, Secretary of State Colin Powell circulated Erdmann's memo to Vice-President Dick Cheney, Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld, and the national-security adviser, Condoleezza Rice. "Maybe it wasn't read," Erdmann said.

Erdmann's view that rebuilding Iraq would require a significant, sustained effort was echoed by the State Department's Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs. Throughout 2002, sixteen groups of Iraqi exiles, coördinated by a bureau official named Thomas S. Warrick, researched potential problems in postwar Iraq, from the electricity grid to the justice system. The thousands of pages that emerged from this effort, which became known as the Future of Iraq Project, presented a sobering view of the country's physical and human infrastructure—and suggested the need for a long-term, expensive commitment.

The Pentagon also spent time developing a postwar scenario, but, because of Rumsfeld's battle with Powell over foreign policy, it didn't coördinate its ideas with the State Department. The planning was directed, in an atmosphere of near-total secrecy, by Douglas J. Feith, the Under-Secretary of Defense for Policy, and William Luti, his deputy. According to a Defense Department official, Feith's team pointedly excluded Pentagon officials with experience in postwar reconstructions. The fear, the official said, was that such people would offer pessimistic scenarios, which would challenge Rumsfeld's aversion to using troops as peacekeepers; if leaked, these scenarios might dampen public enthusiasm for the war. "You got the impression in this exercise that we didn't harness the best and brightest minds in a concerted effort," Thomas E. White, the Secretary of the Army during this period, told me. "With the Department of Defense the first issue was 'We've got to control this thing'—so everyone else was suspect." White was fired in April. Feith's team, he said, "had the mind-set that this would be a relatively straightforward, manageable task, because this would be a war of liberation and therefore the reconstruction would be short-lived."

This was the view held by exiles in the Iraqi National Congress, led by Ahmad Chalabi. The exiles told President Bush that Iraqis would receive their liberators with "sweets and flowers." Their advice led policymakers to assume that Iraqi soldiers and policemen would happily transfer their loyalty to the Americans, providing a ready-made security force. "There was a mistaken notion in certain circles in Washington that the Iraqi civil service would remain intact," Barham Salih, the Prime Minister of the Iraqi Kurdish administration and a strong advocate for the overthrow of Saddam, said. A week before the war, he discussed the problem of law and order with a senior member of the Administration. "They were expecting the police to work after liberation," Salih told me. "I said, 'This is not the N.Y.P.D. It's the Iraqi police. The minute the first cruise missile arrives in Baghdad, the police force degenerates and everybody goes home.' "

In the Pentagon's scenario, the responsibility of managing Iraq would quickly be handed off to exiles, led by Chalabi—allowing the U.S. to retain control without having to commit more troops and invest a lot of money. "There was a desire by some in the Vice-President's office and the Pentagon to cut and run from Iraq and leave it up to Chalabi to run it," a senior Administration official told me. "The idea was to put our guy in there and he was going to be so compliant that he'd recognize Israel and all the problems in the Middle East would be solved. He would be our man in Baghdad. Everything would be hunky-dory." The planning was so wishful that it bordered on self-deception. "It isn't pragmatism, it isn't Realpolitik, it isn't conservatism, it isn't liberalism," the official said. "It's theology."

On January 20th, President Bush signed National Security Presidential Directive No. 24, which gave control of postwar Iraq to the Department of Defense. At the end of the month, the Pentagon threw together a team of soldiers and civilians, under the leadership of retired General Jay Garner, in the newly christened Office of Reconstruction and Humanitarian Assistance. ORHA would administer Iraq after the end of hostilities. The war was only seven weeks away.

In 1991, at the end of the Gulf War, Garner had led the largely successful effort to save Kurdish refugees in northern Iraq. Garner and his inner circle of generals and ambassadors essentially used the same template for the war in Iraq. ORHA was divided into three "pillars," as Garner called them: humanitarian assistance, reconstruction, and civil administration. Garner's experience in northern Iraq led him to focus on the potential for a humanitarian disaster: displaced populations, starvation, outbreaks of disease, prisoners of war, and, above all, chemical-weapons attacks. The U.N. was warning of the possibility of half a million deaths. ORHA thoroughly prepared for each of these nightmares—and if any one of them had come to pass Garner's foresight would have been applauded.

But in concentrating on possible emergencies he failed to consider the long view. On February 21st and 22nd, some two hundred officials gathered in an auditorium at the National Defense University, in Washington, for a "rock drill"—a detailed vetting of the plans that had been made so far. The drill struck some participants as ominous.

"I got the sense that the humanitarian stuff was pretty well in place, but the rest of it was flying blind," one ORHA member recalled. "A lot of it was after hearing from Jay Garner, 'We don't have any resources to do this.' " Plans for running the country's ministries were rudimentary; ORHA had done little research. At Douglas Feith's insistence, his former law partner Michael Mobbs was named the head of the civil-administration team. According to Garner and others, Mobbs never gelled with his new colleagues. Yet this "pillar" would turn out to be the one that mattered most.

During the rock drill, Gordon W. Rudd, a professor from the Marine Corps's Command and Staff College, who had been assigned to Garner's team as a historian, noticed that a man sitting four rows in front of him kept interjecting comments during other people's presentations. "At first, he annoyed me," Rudd said. "Then I realized he was better informed than we were. He had worked the topics, while the guy onstage was a rookie."

It was Tom Warrick, the coördinator of the State Department's Future of Iraq Project, and his frustrations had just begun. Two weeks after the rock drill, after a meeting at the Pentagon, Rumsfeld asked Garner, "Do you have a guy named Warrick on your team?" Rumsfeld ordered Garner to remove Warrick from ORHA, adding, "This came from such a high level I can't say no." Warrick, who had done as much thinking about postwar Iraq as any other American official, never went to Baghdad.

The war between State and Defense

continues: For months, Feith's office has held up the appointment of other senior State Department officials to the C.P.A., even as the organization remains fifty per cent understaffed. The reports of the Future of Iraq Project were archived. In Baghdad, I met an Iraqi-American lawyer named Sermid Al-Sarraf, who had served on the project's transitional-justice working group. He was carrying a copy of its two-hundred-and-fifty-page report, trying to interest C.P.A. officials. Nobody seemed to have read it.

The Administration was remarkably adept at muffling its own internal tensions. On only two occasions did dissenting views become public. The first was on the subject of money: a reporter from the *Wall Street Journal* quoted Lawrence Lindsey, the President's chief economic adviser, floating a figure of up to two hundred billion dollars for the war and the reconstruction. This was at odds with the Administration's projection—stated publicly by Vice-President Cheney and Deputy Secretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz—that the cost of reconstruction would be largely covered by Iraqi oil revenue. By April, the White House had requested only $2.4 billion for postwar rebuilding.

The second rift was over troop deployment. In February, General Eric Shinseki, the Army's chief of staff, testified before the Senate that the occupation of Iraq would require several hundred thousand troops. This prediction prompted Wolfowitz to get on the phone with Thomas White, the Army Secretary. "He was agitated that we in the Army didn't get it," White recalled. "He didn't give arguments or reasons. Their view was that it was going to go the way they said it was going to go." Two days later, Wolfowitz appeared before the House Budget Committee and said that so high an estimate was "wildly off the mark." He explained, "It's hard to conceive that it would take more forces to provide stability in post-Saddam Iraq than it would take to conduct the war itself and to secure the surrender of Saddam's security forces and his Army. Hard to imagine."

On March 16th, three days before the first bombs fell on Baghdad, a hundred and sixty-nine ORHA members flew to Kuwait. Among them was Drew Erdmann.

Though he had left academia behind, Erdmann's reasons for going to Iraq were, in a sense, professional. "My analysis was that we really are at a turning point in history," he told me in Baghdad. "I had a particular historical perspective. I felt that this was a defining event which, good or bad, would have an impact for the next decade. If it went badly, the consequences would be worse than Vietnam. And, second, the postwar phase was going to be the most important." Before heading to Iraq, Erdmann had to justify his plans to his wife, who was skeptical of the need for war. "I knew if I didn't go I'd always regret it," he said. "And my wife did, too. She knew that my regret would be corrosive."

Erdmann asked to join the civil-administration team, led by Mobbs. By the time he reached the beachfront villas in Kuwait where ORHA had set up operations, Mobbs's team was in disarray. They were getting more information about the fighting in Iraq from CNN than from Washington, and nobody even had an "org" chart of the Iraqi ministries. Garner had decided to divide Iraq into three (later four) administrative zones, which meant that ORHA's maps bore no relation to the country's eighteen governorates.

Gordon Rudd, the military historian, was worried enough to speak to Garner. "I said, 'We're not putting enough attention on civil administration.' And he said, in so many words, 'Gordon, that can wait—we've got to focus on humanitarian assistance.' He was thinking about saving lives, not reforming Iraq. And at the time that made perfect sense."

"I really like Jay Garner," one ORHA member told me. "But I never got from him what the vision was and what we were going to do. To the extent that I did, it didn't seem remotely realistic to me—that we would be going in there for three months and we would get everything in order and we would be done."

In Kuwait, Erdmann and some others felt so undirected that they began looking for tasks. Together they drew up a list of sixteen key sites around Baghdad that the military should secure and protect upon the fall of the city. At the top of the list was the Central Bank. No. 2 was the Iraqi Museum. "Symbolic importance," Erdmann explained. The Ministry of Oil was last.

On March 26th, the list went to the military war planners at Camp Doha, near the Iraqi border. Two weeks later, as

"Try not to get irrepressible."

Baghdad fell and intense looting began, Erdmann and the others went to Camp Doha to find out what had happened to their list. They met with a young British officer. "He's sitting there on the stool in front, in his British desert cammies," Erdmann recalled. "And he's, like, 'Well, you know, I just became aware of this big stack of stuff that you ORHA guys did yesterday.' " The list had fallen into a bureaucratic gap—and now Erdmann was watching on television as the Iraqi Museum was looted and the ministries were burned.

One day during the war, Albert Cevallos, at the time a contractor with the United States Agency for International Development, was standing with a group of civil-affairs officers at the Iraq-Kuwait border. One officer asked him, "What's the plan for policing?"

Cevallos's job was in the field of human rights. "I thought you knew the plan," he said.

"No, we thought *you* knew."

"Haven't you talked to ORHA?"

"No, no one talked to us."

Cevallos wanted to run away. "It was like a Laurel and Hardy routine," he said. "What happened to the plans? This is like the million-dollar question that I can't figure out."

Timothy Carney, a career foreign-service officer who was called out of retirement by Wolfowitz to join Mobbs's team, said that the military simply didn't understand ORHA's importance. "It was as if these guys didn't have a clue what Jay Garner was about," he said. "There was no priority given to the essential aspects of our mission."

Erdmann was impatient with any facile condemnation of the planning effort. When I mentioned that, in 1944, the United States military had produced a four-hundred-page manual for the occupation of Germany, he retorted that, given the available lead time, a fairer comparison would be with the wartime occupation of French North Africa, which was so beset with problems that it nearly cost General Eisenhower his job. Erdmann reminded me that, in the case of Iraq, doing any planning at all was a delicate matter. The Administration had to prepare for the effects of a war it was still claiming it wanted to avoid.

"How much diplomacy would there have been at the U.N. if people had said, 'The President is pulling people out of the Departments of Agriculture and Commerce to take over the whole Iraqi state'?" Erdmann said. "That's the political logic that works against advance planning."

But the haste and confusion of the planning, the determination to keep grim forecasts out of public view, the groundless assumptions, the desire to do it on the cheap—all this left Erdmann and his colleagues poorly prepared for what awaited them when they finally reached Baghdad, on April 23rd.

"FREEDOM'S UNTIDY"

An infantry captain in Baghdad gave me his war log for the months of March, April, and May. The days leading up to the city's fall are crowded with incidents. But immediately after April 9th, when the statue of Saddam Hussein was pulled down, the entries turn brief: "Nothing significant to report, stayed at airport all day doing maintenance and recovery operations." Meanwhile, the city's leading institutions were being plundered.

It remains a mystery why American forces did so little to stop the looting. Martial law was not declared; it was days before a curfew was imposed throughout the city. It was as if the fall of Baghdad were the military's only objective. At a Pentagon news conference, Rumsfeld regarded the chaos with equanimity. "Freedom's untidy," he said. "Free people are free to make mistakes and commit crimes and do bad things."

The economic cost of the looting was estimated at twelve billion dollars. The ruined buildings, the lost equipment, the destroyed records, and the damaged infrastructure continue to hamper the reconstruction. But on a more profound level the looting meant that Iraqis' first experience of freedom was disorder and violence. The arrival of the Americans therefore unleashed new fears, even as it brought an end to political terror. The Administration had naïvely concluded that an imprisoned and brutalized population would respond to its release by gratefully setting up a democratic society. There was no contingency for psychological demolition. What had been left out of the planning was the Iraqis themselves.

"The state disappeared," Erdmann said. "Mostly, either the people melted away or the institutions were melted down by them." By the time Erdmann and his colleagues moved into the Republican Palace, which was without doors or windows or electricity or water, with half an inch of fine desert dust coating everything, they were already months behind schedule.

Iraqis, who had been taught by Saddam that individual initiative could be fatal, were waiting to be told what would come next; and no one told them. Many reacted to the vacuum with a kind of paralysis. "People just stopped doing everything that they would normally do," an ORHA official recalled. In late April, a man in a Shia neighborhood approached Noah Feldman, a law professor at New York University, who had come to Iraq as a constitutional adviser, and asked him who was in charge. Nobody seemed to know.

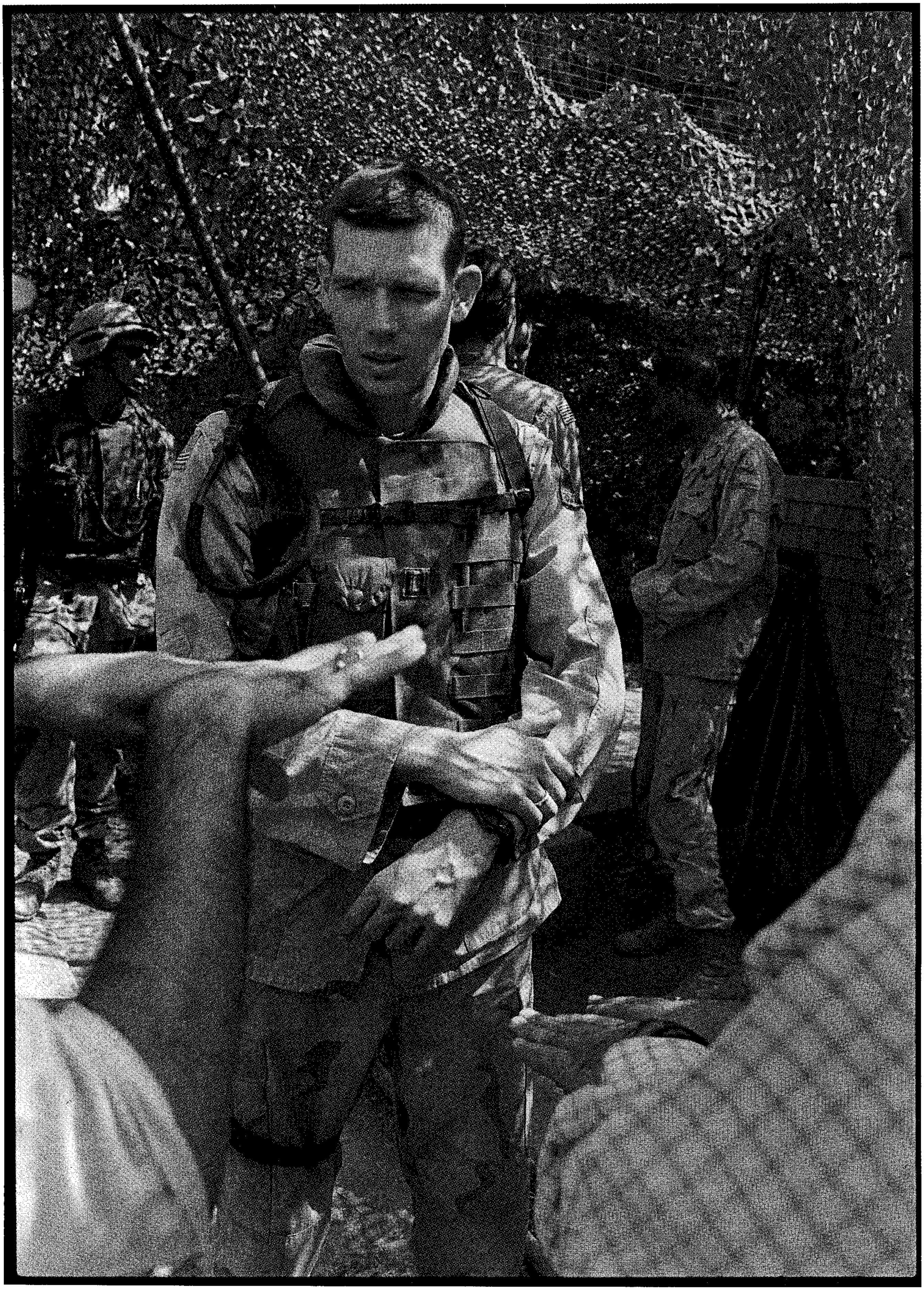
"We were incompetent, as far as they were concerned," Feldman said. "The key to it all was the looting. That was when it was clear that there was no order. There's an Arab proverb: Better forty years of oppression than one day of anarchy." He added, "That also told them they could fight against us—that we were not a serious force."

In the last week of April, American officials met with three hundred and fifty Iraqis in the Baghdad Convention Center to discuss the country's future. Garner was asked by a tribal sheikh, "Who's in charge of our politics?"

"*You're* in charge," Garner answered.

The audience gasped. An American who was present said, "I later realized they were losing faith in us by the second."

Upon his arrival in Baghdad, Erdmann joined an effort to find the highest-ranking officials "still left standing" from the Saddam regime—if only to fire them. But the ministries had been stripped of everything, including the urinals and pipes. Simply getting out of the palace was difficult, with few military escorts available. Progress depended almost entirely on random encounters in the city between American officials and Iraqi bureaucrats. "You had Iraqis just showing up at work, hoping that someone from the coalition would stop at their ministry, and saying, 'Welcome. Take me to your leader,' " Erdmann recalled, laughing. "No joke! It was like, 'I represent the Grand Galactic Federation.' " He cupped



Captain John Prior was among the first to encounter the human problems in an Iraq that was neither at peace nor at war.

OPTION #43
If you are calling from a rotary phone, hang up, go to an electronics store, and BUY YOURSELF A PUSH-BUTTON PHONE, YOU PATHETIC, TECHNOPHOBIC, ECONOMY-SLOWING LOSER!!!

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his hands around his mouth to make a ghostly echo. " '*Who are you? And what is your position?*' Then they'd tell you their job, and then it's like, 'What the hell is that?' "

Owing to the tightfistedness of the Office of Management and Budget, in Washington, Erdmann and his colleagues initially had roughly twenty-five thousand dollars for each devastated Iraqi ministry. Getting the money required grant applications that took several weeks for approval. (This process was later streamlined.) "To do reconstruction, you need to have the ability to deliver resources right away," Erdmann said. "People in a desperate situation need help. Boy, that's a blindingly obvious insight! The next thing is that if you're not giving them help they're going to go somewhere else."

After spending just twenty-four hours in the capital, Jay Garner flew north to Kurdish territory, where he was acclaimed as a hero. He met with the two Kurdish leaders, Massoud Barzani and Jalal Talabani, to discuss the political handoff. The Kurds and the opposition leaders who had been in exile, including Ahmad Chalabi, would form a provisional government in Baghdad, along with a few "internals"—Iraqis from inside the country. When these pro-Western Iraqis took charge, the Americans could slough off some responsibility without giving up power.

Garner recently spoke with me in his office at the defense-contracting company he now heads near the Pentagon. I asked him if these political moves had been directed by Defense officials. "I never got a call from anybody saying, 'Don't do that,' " Garner said. "You follow me?"

But Chalabi short-circuited the plan. According to an Iraqi politician who was close to the negotiations, Chalabi, along with the Shiite leader Muhammad Bakr al-Hakim, who was killed in an August car bombing, resisted Garner's idea of including internals—and anyone else who might diminish their power. "They wanted basically to control who would be there," the Iraqi politician said.

Chalabi's obstructionism ultimately didn't matter. The handoff scenario that had been hatched in Washington was disintegrating even as Garner was trying to carry it out. "The exiles made a big mistake, thinking that they could ride an American tank into Baghdad and gain legitimacy. It just doesn't work that way," the Iraqi politician said. Chalabi and the seven-hundred-man militia of the Iraqi National Congress, which commandeered choice properties upon arrival in Baghdad, were not acclaimed by their compatriots. ("They may have looked like a bit of a warlord group," Gordon Rudd said. "I told that to Garner. He said, 'Gordon, I don't like that word.' ") Making matters worse, the police and the Army had not defected; they had disappeared. Criminal gangs proliferated throughout the city.

"All of this was funnelled up to Feith," a senior Administration official said, "and from Feith to Rumsfeld, and they had a come-to-Jesus meeting and said, 'We've got to change things fast.' "

In late April, Rumsfeld called Garner to tell him that the veteran diplomat L. Paul Bremer would be replacing him. It was a tacit admission that the situation in Iraq was out of control. In an interview, Feith insisted that Garner's removal was routine and signalled no change of policy. He also denied that the Administration had been intent on transferring power to Chalabi. "The idea that we had a rigid plan for the political transition is a mistake," he said. "We developed concepts, policy guidelines—for example, organize as much authority as possible in Iraqi hands. That is a policy guideline. But, as for specific names and timetables and rules, nobody here presumed to dictate that, because you can't possibly know that. That's like trying to tell a local commander in advance of the battle exactly how many people to put where as the fighting proceeds. Nobody can work with a plan that rigid. Nobody here in Washington is micromanaging."

But Bremer suggested that his appointment was marked "Urgent." "I had ten days to get ready to come here," he told me in Baghdad. A former diplomat who had served under Republican Presidents before becoming the managing director of Henry Kissinger's consulting firm, Bremer was acceptable to Rumsfeld; his selection represented a brief truce in the war between Defense and

State. By mid-May, he had taken Garner's place. Garner had worn shirtsleeves and insisted on being called Jay; his successor wore a suit and was referred to as Ambassador Bremer. ORHA was dissolved into the Coalition Provisional Authority, and Bremer, with the status of a Presidential envoy, the legal imprimatur of a U.N. Security Council resolution, and the command authority that Garner never had, let it be known that he was in control. The Iraqi Army was promptly abolished, all members of the top four levels of the Baath Party were expelled from government service, Chalabi's militia was disarmed, and the formation of a provisional government was stopped cold. There was even talk of shooting looters, though it didn't happen.

The Defense Department, which was predicting in early May that troop levels would be down to thirty thousand by the end of the summer, extended the deployment of battle-weary divisions indefinitely. What had been envisaged as a swift liberation had become a prolonged occupation.

To this day, key policymakers maintain their faith in the Pentagon's original plan. According to a senior Administration official, not long ago in Washington, Cheney approached Powell, stuck a finger in his chest, and said, "If you hadn't opposed the I.N.C. and Chalabi, we wouldn't be in this mess." But one Pentagon official acknowledged that his agency was responsible for the debacle. "It was ridiculous," he said. "Rummy and Wolfowitz and Feith did not believe the U.S. would need to run post-conflict Iraq. Their plan was to turn it over to these exiles very quickly and let them deal with the messes that came up. Garner was a fall guy for a bad strategy. He was doing exactly what Rummy wanted him to do. It was the strategy that failed."

THE CAPTAIN

In April, CNN aired footage of a marine in Baghdad who is confronted with a crowd of angry Iraqis. He shouts back in frustration, "We're here for your fucking freedom!"

In the months following the overthrow of Saddam, tens of thousands of soldiers who thought they would be home by June saw their departures postponed again and again. They are now the occupation's most visible face. Combat engineers trained to blow up minefields sit through meetings of the Baghdad water department; airborne troops who jump in and out of missions spend months setting up the Kirkuk police department; soldiers of the 3rd Infantry Division who spearheaded the invasion pass out textbooks in a Baghdad girls' school. The peacekeeping missions in the Balkans gave some of them a certain amount of preparation, but there was little training for the concerted effort now required of soldiers in Iraq. Ray Jennings, a policy consultant who spent several months in Iraq, told me that he encountered officers running midsized cities who said, "I'm doing the best I can, but I don't know how to do this, I don't have a manual. You got a manual?" A civil-affairs captain asked Albert Cevallos for training in "Robert's Rules of Order 101." Rumsfeld's nightmare of an army of nation-builders has come to pass in Iraq.

The captain who showed me his war log was a company commander named John Prior. He is a twenty-nine-year-old from Indiana, six feet tall and stringy. His youthful face, deadpan sarcasm, and bouncy slew-footed stride do not prepare you for his toughness.

"Some people are just born to do something," Prior said. By his own account, he loves Army life, the taking and giving of orders. "The sappy reasons people say they're in the military—those are the reasons I'm in," he said. "When the Peace Corps can't quite get it done and diplomacy fails and McDonald's can't build enough franchises to win Baghdad over, that's when the military comes in."

His unit, Charlie Company of the 2nd Battalion, 6th Infantry Regiment, is now based at the Iraqi military academy in south Baghdad. (His soldiers' sleeping quarters are festooned with crêpe-paper decorations from the last Ramadan.) The academy is next to the bombed ruins of a vast military camp and airfield that have become home to five thousand displaced people, looters, and petty criminals. After the fall of Baghdad, it took two and a half months for Prior's company to arrive at its current location. During their odyssey in central Iraq, Prior and his men came to realize that what President Bush, on May 1st, had called the end of "major combat operations" was just the beginning.

Charlie Company's first mission after the fall of Baghdad sent Prior west to the town of Ramadi, to retrieve the body of Veronica Cabrera, an Argentine journalist who had been killed in a highway accident. Prior and his soldiers were the first conventional forces to enter Ramadi, which was becoming a center of Baathist resistance. The company was asked by Special Forces and the C.I.A. to stay on for a few days and help patrol the town. They promptly found themselves in the middle of an anti-American riot, with insults, fruit, shoes, two-by-fours, rocks, and, finally, chunks of concrete flying at them. The Americans didn't shoot and no one was seriously injured; in his log Prior commends his soldiers for their restraint. In the following days in Ramadi, and then in the nearby town of Fallujah, Prior records a series of successful raids on houses and weapons markets. He expresses pride in his soldiers' resourcefulness. Then something new and strange enters the margins of his account: Iraqis.

In Ramadi, a man who speaks broken English around other Iraqis suddenly pulls Prior aside and whispers in flawless English, "I am an American, take me with you." When Prior tries to learn more, the man reverts to broken English and then clams up. Another man on another day approaches a soldier and, speaking perfect English, warns him not to trust Iraqis—that things are not what they seem. He disappears before the soldier can get more information. Prior and his first sergeant, Mark Lahan, track down the man at home with his family. Now using broken English, the man tells them that everything is fine.

In another mysterious incident, an Iraqi approaches Lahan and abruptly asks, "How are things in Baghdad? Have there been any suicide bombings? Have any Americans been killed?" Soon afterward, the guerrilla war starts.

"The entire situation seemed very weird," Prior writes on April 26th, after five days in Ramadi. "It is clear now that they are not as happy as they say that we are here. For the first time in a while, I felt extremely nervous being in such close proximity to Iraqi nationals." In another entry, from Fallujah, he writes, "The Iraqis are an interesting people. None of them have weapons, none of them know where weapons are, all the bad people have left Fallujah, and they only want life

Paul Bremer, the head of the Coalition Provisional Authority, with Iyad Alawi, a member of the Iraqi Governing Counci

to be normal again. Unfortunately, our compound was hit by R.P.G."—rocket-propelled-grenade—"fire today, so I am not inclined to believe them."

Prior was among the first soldiers to encounter the hidden nature of things in an Iraq that was neither at war nor at peace. Firepower and good intentions would be less important than learning to read the signs. Iraqis, no longer forming the cheering crowds that had greeted the company on its way up to Baghdad, were now going to play an intimate role in Prior's life.

The raids in Ramadi and Fallujah lasted almost a month; then Charlie Company was recalled to Baghdad. There Captain Prior's log ends. "We put trouble down, we left," he told me. "Trouble came again."

Charlie Company spent its first month back in Baghdad billeted at the zoo. The soldiers had been there in mid-April, on a mission to escort a truckload of produce and frozen meat ("A gift from the Kuwaiti people to the Iraqi people") for the few animals that had survived firefights and were too dangerous or worthless to steal. I visited the zoo several times, and the experience was always upsetting. It was the one place in Iraq where Saddam's regime seemed still to exist. "It was not a zoo, but more of an animal prison," Prior notes in his log. "Small cages, closely packed, no attempt to give the animals any sense of natural setting." Dogs and puppies, favorites of Saddam, lay panting in sweltering cells next to a catatonic blind bear that had mutilated its own chest. (Some of the dogs had been fed to the lions during the war, when food supplies ran out.) The soldiers who took control of the zoo in April found a baboon loose on the grounds; it proved harmless to them, but when one of the zookeepers, who had been hiding in his office, was brought out the animal flew into a rage and at-

graduation of new Iraqi recruits.

tacked him, so that the soldiers had to shoot the baboon to save the Baathist.

Bremer's C.P.A., needing a public-relations victory, refurbished the zoo and reopened it to the public in July, with great fanfare; the cost was close to a half million dollars. On a subsequent visit, I found the place, which had been popular before the war, desolate and nearly abandoned. It was surrounded by American checkpoints, which discouraged families from visiting. In September, a group of soldiers at the zoo got drunk after hours, and one of them reached into the cage of a Bengal tiger with a piece of meat; when his hand started to disappear into the tiger's mouth, one of his buddies shot the animal. The Baghdad Zoo seemed to combine the cruelty and injustice of the old regime with some of the stupidity and carelessness of the new.

Charlie Company spent a month establishing security in the area near the zoo and setting up a neighborhood council. Then, in late June, the company was moved again—to the military academy in south Baghdad—because its zone of control did not coincide with Baghdad's administrative districts. "We'd made friends there," Prior recalled. Packing up again, he said, "was not that cool." He added dryly, "We'd been planning this war since freaking 12 September, and it might have helped if someone had drawn a map before the war and figured out where everyone went."

According to the brigade's original calendar, Baghdad's infrastructure would be rebuilt in August, elections would take place in September, and the soldiers would leave the city in October. This brisk forecast was soon abandoned, of course. Because of confused planning, it wasn't until August that Charlie Company's activities began to yield tangible benefits for Iraqis. And there was no time to lose. Throughout the summer, electric power operated sporadically, violence of all kinds kept rising, and Iraqis who could have been won over to the American side were steadily lost.

One morning, I sat in the base-camp canteen with Prior, First Sergeant Lahan, and their translator, Numan Al-Nima, a gray-haired former engineer with Iraqi Airways. Prior opened a coalition map of Baghdad's security zones and showed me the piece of the city he "owns": a rectangle of Zafaraniya, a largely Shiite slum in south Baghdad. Roughly two hundred and fifty thousand people live in the area. Prior chairs the new neighborhood council and is in charge of small reconstruction projects such as renovating schools; he's also responsible for sewage and trash disposal in his battalion's zone, which contains half a million people.

"Infrastructure is the key now," Prior said more than once. "If these people have electricity, water, food, the basics of life, they're less likely to attack." Sewage, Prior realized, was the front line of nation-building. When I met him, in early August, Prior was trying to get two hundred thousand dollars into the hands of Iraqi contractors as fast as he could.

"Show us something," the translator urged Prior. "People are hungry, starving. They don't believe they got rid of Saddam. If they got rid of Saddam, give me something to eat. That's why people hate Americans. We don't hate them because they are Americans. It is because they are the superpower, but where is the super power?"

We went out into the streets of Zafaraniya, travelling in the usual two-Humvee convoy, complete with gunners. Captain Prior's mission that morning was to visit nine pumping stations, which directed the district's untreated sewage into the Tigris and the Diala Rivers. To study a Shiite slum's sewage is to understand that Saddam reduced those parts of Iraq he didn't favor to the level of Kinshasa or Manila. Green ponds of raw waste, eighteen inches deep, blocked the roads between apartment houses where children played. The open ditches that were the area's drainage system were overflowing.

"How foolish of me not to realize that the open sludge flowing past the children is the way the system is supposed to work," Prior remarked. A complete overhaul of the system was not his immediate priority. "I'm going to support their open-sewage sludge line and get it flowing," he said. The heat rose, the streets stank, and Prior moved in battle gear at such a businesslike pace that two engineers from another battalion struggled to keep up. Each of the pumping stations, in various states of disrepair, was maintained and guarded by an Iraqi family that lived in a hovel on the premises, tended a lush vegetable garden, and kept an AK-47. Prior had never studied civil engineering—and he reminded me that his unit contained no city planners—but he already seemed to have mastered the inner workings of the Zafaraniya sewer system. Lahan told me, "People have said the Army's done this before, in '45 with Japan and Germany. Unfortunately, none of those people are in the Army anymore, so we have to figure it out ourselves."

With Prior, there were no earnest attempts to win hearts and minds over multiple cups of tea. He was all brisk practicality, and the Iraqis he worked with, who always had more to say than Prior gave them time for, seemed to respect him. "I will get you the money," he told a grizzled old man who was explain-ing at length that his pump was broken. "Six thousand U.S.? Yeah, yeah, great. Get started."

Later, we visited Zafaraniya's gas station, another of Prior's responsibilities. Initially, he had devoted his energy to getting customers to wait in orderly lines. "In a lot of ways, you're trying to teach them a new way of doing things," he said. "'Teach' might be the wrong word—they're capable, competent, intelligent people. We're just giving them a different way to solve certain problems."

Prior's mission that day was to settle a price dispute between the gas-station managers and the community, which was represented by several neighborhood council members. A meeting took place in the gas-station managers' cramped back office, equipped with an underperforming air-conditioner. The council members wanted three hundred litres of diesel set aside every week for neighborhood generators. The managers wanted written permission from the Ministry of Oil.

The council members pulled out authorizations signed by various American officers. Prior tried to move the discussion along, but the Iraqis kept arguing, until it became clear that the problem went beyond a dispute over diesel. One of the most hierarchical, top-down state systems on earth had been wiped out almost overnight, and no new system had yet taken its place. The neighborhood councils are imperfect embryos of local democracy. Confused, frustrated Iraqis turn to the Americans, who seem to have all the power and money; the Americans, who don't see themselves as occupiers, try to force the Iraqis to work within their own institutions, but those institutions have been largely dismantled.

Flies were landing on Prior's brush cut. "Guys, we've been talking about this for twenty minutes," he said to the council members. "Do what I say. Go to the Oil Ministry. Just do it—just be done with it. Then you won't have to have slips of paper and we won't have to have this conversation."

Everyone was getting irritated. One of the council members told Prior that other Iraqis suspected them of making millions of dinars off public service. They were considered collaborators; their lives had been threatened.

Prior changed his tone and lowered the pressure. "I would tell all of you candidly that you have a very tough job," he said. "We are not paying you, your people are angry and frustrated, and I know they take out their anger on you, and I really thank you for what you're doing. They may not understand or appreciate it now, but I'm telling you, your efforts, they're what are going to transform this country."

There was a commotion outside the office—loud, accusatory voices. Prior put on his helmet and flak vest, grabbed his rifle, and went out to the pumps. Customers had left their vehicles, a crowd had formed, and it was getting ugly enough that the soldiers who had been waiting by the Humvees were trying to intervene. Amid the shouting, Prior established that an employee of the Oil Ministry had come to collect diesel samples from each of the pumps for routine testing. One of the council members was accusing him of stealing benzene.

"No accusations!" Prior said. "Let's go see."

The crowd followed him under the blinding sun to the ministry employee's truck. Five metal jerricans stood in back. Prior opened the first can with the air of making a point and sniffed: "Diesel." He opened the second: "Diesel." As he unscrewed the cap on the third jerrican and bent over to smell it, hot diesel fuel sprayed in his face.

Everyone fell silent. Prior stood motionless with the effort to control himself. He squeezed his eyes shut and pressed them with his fingers. The fuel was on his helmet, his flak vest. A sergeant rushed over with bottled water. Then the chorus of shouts rose again.

"Everybody shut up!" Prior yelled. "I'm going to solve this. What is the problem? No accusations." His face wet, he began to interrogate the accusing council member, who now looked sheepish.

"How do you know someone gave him benzene? This is a great object lesson, everybody!" Prior was speaking to the crowd now, as his translator frantically rendered the lesson in Arabic. "You came out here and said this guy's a thief, and everybody's angry and he's going to get fired—and now you're backing down."

"It wasn't just an accusation," the council member said. "The guy drove up on the wrong side—"

"But what proof do you have that he did it? Wait! Hold on! I'm trying to make a point here. How would you like it if my soldiers broke into your house because your neighbors said you have rocket-propelled grenades, and I didn't see them but I broke into your house—how would you feel? Stop accusing people, for the love of God!"

"I caught him red-handed," the council member insisted.

"No, you didn't."

"O.K., no problem."

Prior wasn't letting it go. "There is a problem: the problem is that you people accuse each other without proof! *That's* the problem."

Prior's treatise on evidence-gathering and due process ended. The crowd dispersed, and the meeting resumed inside. Prior tried to laugh off the incident. "Who doesn't like diesel in their eyes?" he joked. Later, he told me, "I wish I hadn't lost my temper. It wasn't the diesel—it was the way they kept bickering."

That afternoon, two of the council members, Ahmed Ogali and Abdul Jabbar Doweich, invited me for lunch. Both men were poor, and neither had a home he was proud of, so we ate chicken and rice in the living room of Ogali's brother-in-law. Ogali, a thirty-three-year-old gym teacher, said, "Today was a small problem. If I told you about our problems, you wouldn't believe it. They exhaust us." Both men were working without pay—they couldn't even get cell phones or travel money from the C.P.A. "Prior is doing more than his best," Ogali said. "But he's also controlled by his leaders."

Doweich, an unemployed father of four, had spent eight years in prison under Saddam for belonging to an Islamist political party. He still hoped for an Islamic state in the future—as did eighty per cent of Iraqis, he added.

"That's his personal opinion," Ogali interrupted. "It's not eighty per cent."

For now, Doweich saw working with Captain Prior on the neighborhood council as the best way to serve his country. The expectations of Iraqis were falling on the council members' heads, and Doweich believed that, at levels well above Prior, American officials had no interest in solving problems.

"The people are watching," Ogali said. "When I come back at night, they're waiting. They want to know what we're doing. Last week, I told them about the schools, the sewer projects. They were happy—

but these are very old projects, they were promised for a long time."

Doweich suggested that the Americans give a hundred dollars to every Iraqi family. That would take the edge off people's frustration. "I can't say why the Americans don't do these things," he said. "Iraqis have trouble understanding Americans."

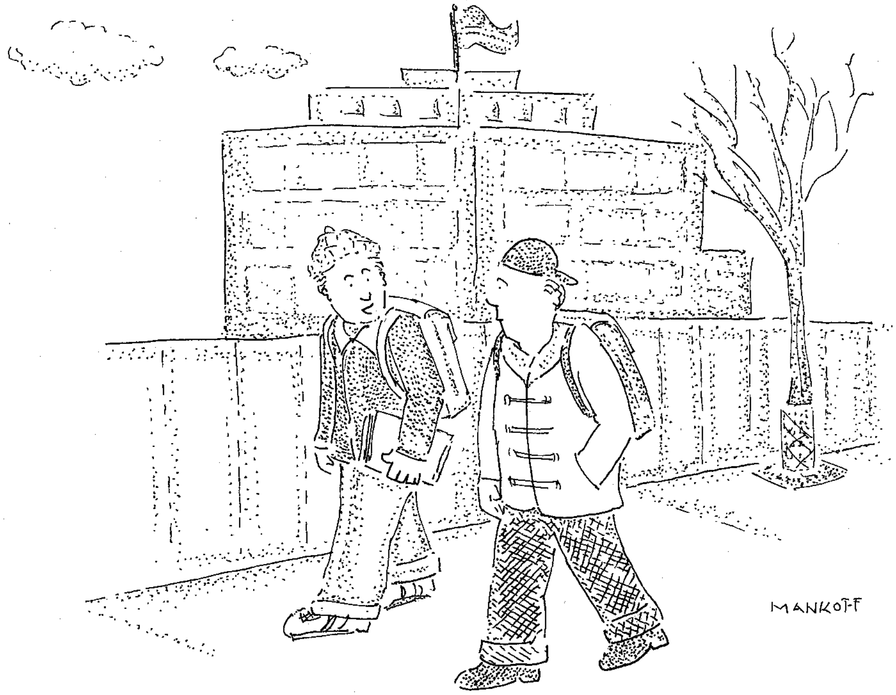
Ogali said that, sadly, the reverse was also true. The Americans, he told me, "came here to do a job, and that's what they'll do. Iraqis work closely with them, but they don't try to understand us."

American soldiers have a phrase for the Iraqis' habit of turning one another in. Prior once used it: "These people dime each other out like there's no tomorrow." With these betrayals, Iraqis play on soldiers' fears and ignorance, pulling them into private feuds that the Americans have no way of adjudicating.

The night after the meeting at the gas station, Prior and a few dozen soldiers from Charlie Company went out in two Humvees and two Bradleys to look for a suspected fedayeen militiaman. For such missions, Prior used a different translator: a strapping young guy with an aggressive manner. I expected to see the rougher side of Prior and Charlie Company that night—these were soldiers, after all, not civil engineers.

The suspected fedayeen happened to be named Saddam Hussein, and he was High Value Target No. 497. It would be the Americans' second visit to his house. The tip had come from a plump informant whom Prior called Operative Chunky Love, and whose intelligence had already tagged three men in the neighborhood, including his brother-in-law. Tonight, Chunky Love was supposed to show up at his sister's house, near Saddam Hussein's, in an orange garbage truck loaded with weapons—a sting operation. Lahan warned me, "Out of a hundred tips we've gotten from Iraqi intelligence, one has worked out."

Recently, Prior had experienced what he called an epiphany. He and his soldiers were searching a man's house on what turned out to be a false accusation. "And I just realized—we're on top," he said. "Rome fell, and Greece fell, and I thought, I like being an American. I like being on top, and you don't stay on top unless there's people willing to defend it." It was a feeling not of triumph but of clarity—and a limited kind of empathy. "I thought, What if someone did this to my family? I'd be pissed. And what if I couldn't do anything about it? And I thought, I don't want this to happen to me or my family, and we need to maintain superiority as the No. 1 superpower."



"With the caveat that the only certainty in this life is uncertainty, I still want to entertain the possibility of being a pundit when I grow up."

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Tonight's target was a village along a dirt road, on a peninsula where the Diala River doubles back on itself. At sunset, Prior pulled up before a yard where a cow was grazing. A middle-aged woman came to the gate. She was the sister of Saddam Hussein and the wife of one of the men picked up on Prior's last visit.

"Saddam Hussein?" she said. "The President? He's not here." She laughed nervously. Prior did not; his dry humor was not in evidence tonight. "Saddam Hussein moved out with his wife and children," she said. "I don't know where they went."

"She's lying," the translator told Prior, in a thuggish tone. Prior told the woman that he wanted to search the house. A younger woman who looked ill was trying to calm a crying baby.

The search of the bedroom turned up nothing: pictures of a young man with his girlfriend, love notes, Arab girlie photographs.

I went back into the living room, which was nearly bare except for a television. An old Egyptian movie was on, without sound. The woman with the baby was retching in the doorway. Speaking Arabic, the middle-aged woman exclaimed, "We were happy when you Americans came to get rid of the dictator—and now here you are searching our house." Her two sons, about six and ten, were standing against a wall and staring at the soldiers. They would never forget this, I thought—big strangers in uniforms, with guns, who had already come once and taken away their father, speaking a strange language, walking through their home, removing things from closets.

The bedroom that Prior had searched turned out to be the wrong one. Saddam Hussein's bedroom was locked, and the woman couldn't produce a key. A soldier arrived with an axe; three blows with the blunt end broke open the door. The younger woman's retching grew louder. This search, too, was fruitless. Saddam Hussein was long gone.

Night had fallen while we were inside. As we left, the translator taunted the woman: he said her brother was wanted because his name was Saddam Hussein. When Prior heard this, he snapped, "Tell her the truth—he's wanted for being fedayeen." By morning, I was sure, the translator's remark would have made its way around the neighborhood as an example of American justice—baseless arrest, accusation without proof.

The woman brought up her husband's case. Why had he been taken away?

"Because he's fedayeen," Prior said. "He's Baath Party."

"No! No! No!"

"Tell her he's in detention," Prior instructed the translator. "That if he's guilty he'll be kept there. If he's not, he'll be processed and released." (A few days later, he was let go.)

Out on the road, Prior shone his flashlight on an old man sitting on the ground. "Why did you lie to me last time we were here and say he was just gone for the day? Tell Saddam Hussein that he's a fugitive from coalition justice, and when he returns he should turn himself in to coalition forces immediately. Let's go, we're out of here."

We drove farther down the road and parked in front of a tall hedge. The house behind the hedge was owned by Chunky Love's sister. Prior and another soldier moved along the hedge under the palm trees and a full moon. Prior called out into the silence, "*Salaam alaikum*"—"Peace be with you."

The translator turned to me. "Like Vietnam."

I was having the same thought. I knew that it was a limited analogy, more useful for polemic than for insight, but at the moment Iraq *did* feel like Vietnam. The Americans were moving half blind in an alien landscape, missing their quarry and leaving behind frightened women and boys with memories.

There was no sign of Chunky Love or his orange garbage truck full of weapons. His sister hadn't seen him in a month; when she did, she told the translator, she would kill him for turning in her husband.

Prior realized that he'd been pulled into a family feud. The sister was told that her husband would be released. Prior called this the "hearts-and-minds moment," but the sister did not look grateful.

"What do you think, First Sergeant?" Prior asked Lahan on the way back to the base.

"I think we should disassociate ourselves from any information from Chunky Love," Lahan said. Operative Chunky Love had gone from informant to fugitive.

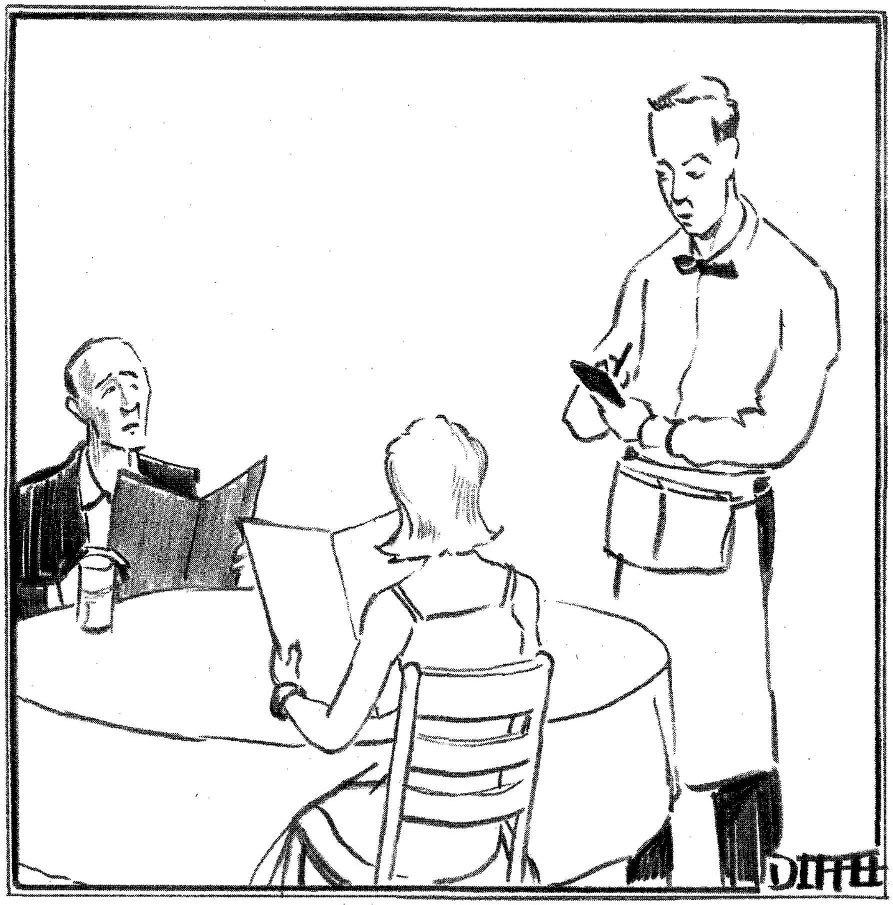
Prior marvelled over how many flatly contradictory stories he had heard from the same people during his two visits to the neighborhood. He admitted that he would never get to the bottom of them all. "I'm not freaking Sherlock Holmes," he said. Then he deadpanned, "I'm just an average guy, trying to get by."

Later, I asked Prior whether his night work threatened to undo the good accomplished by his day work. He didn't think so: as the sewage started to flow and the schools got fixed up, Iraqis would view Americans the way the Americans see themselves—as people trying to help.

Others at Prior's base are less sanguine. His battalion is under serious strain: In their first six months of deployment, some soldiers had only three days off. Others are stretched so thin that, one soldier told me, they've been reporting "ghost patrols" back to headquarters—logging in scheduled patrols that didn't actually take place. Prior wants to make a career in the Army, but many other junior officers plan to quit after their current tour. Alcohol use, which is illegal for soldiers stationed in Iraq, has become widespread, and there have been three suicides in other battalions at the base.

At the end of a four-day patrol rotation, relations between young Americans and the Iraqis tend to deteriorate, according to one officer, into "guys kicking dogs, yelling at grown men twenty years older than they are, and pushing kids into parked cars to keep them from following and bothering them." In September, soldiers in a platoon from Charlie Company were accused of beating up Iraqi prisoners. All the soldiers suffer from the stress of heat, long days, lack of sleep, homesickness, the constant threat of attack (about which they are fundamentally fatalistic), and the simple fact that there are nowhere near enough of them to do the tasks they've been given.

For some reason, this last point continues to be controversial in Washington. Rumsfeld echoes his generals' assurances that no additional American divisions are needed. Meanwhile, Iraq's borders remain



"The grilled snapper also comes with a bonus audio commentary from the chef."

basically undefended and its highways unpatrolled; tons of munitions lie around the country unguarded. Overburdened soldiers have begun to lose hope even as their work begins to show results.

One soldier at Prior's base recently wrote me a lengthy e-mail:

> The reason why morale sucks is because of the senior leadership, the brigade and division commanders, and probably the generals at the Pentagon and Central Command too, all of whom seem to be insulated from what is going on at the ground level. Either that or they are unwilling to hear the truth of things, or (and this is the most likely), they do know what is going on, but they want to get promoted so badly that they're willing to screw over soldiers by being unwilling to face the problem of morale, so they continue pushing the soldiers to do more with less because Rummy wants them to get us out of here quickly. These people are like serious alcoholics unwilling to admit there even is a problem.

His letter concluded:

> There are great things we're doing here, much has already been done, yet much more remains to be accomplished, and what we need now is the money, people, and most importantly, time to do it. We'll win, that's for sure, and this won't be another Vietnam; I truly believe that.

In early November, Captain Prior spoke with me on the phone from Baghdad. The sewage ponds have been cleaned up, and security in his sector has improved with better intelligence. The council members are now being paid sixty dollars a month and run their own meetings. Abdul Jabbar Doweich has a job as a security guard. But, for various reasons, Prior's division has stopped paying for new reconstruction projects, and current projects are running out of funds. Hearing this, I remembered something Prior had said as we were driving into Saddam Hussein's village: "The most frustrating thing is we can't do more for them. My hands are tied—everyone's are."

THE SHEIKH

"THE HUMAN COMMITTEE FOR PRISONNERS AND LOSSNERS INTERNATIONAL," said the sign on a side street in Kadhimiya, a Shiite neighborhood in the northern part of Baghdad. The sign indicated a two-story building that was office and home to Sheikh Emad al-Din al-Awadi. The sheikh had spent almost ten years in Saddam's prisons, where he had formed a clandestine prisoners' group. Now that Saddam was gone, he was becoming an important man in Baghdad. Like other Shiites, he was eager to fill the vacuum of postwar Iraq with his own ideas.

On April 12th, word reached the sheikh that the central market building in the expensive Al Mansour district was on fire. Before the war, the security police had stowed millions of prisoner files in the building's basement. Now the Baathists were trying to destroy the files, and the sheikh and a handful of associates, armed with knives, raced across town to salvage the evidence. Other groups were already on the scene, but the sheikh's group managed to carry away carloads of files and microfilm to Kadhimiya, along with a melted Canon microfilm reader. The sheikh understood that these documents, stored in pink and green folders, represented not just the past but the future.

They now fill old metal file drawers stacked to the top of his high-ceilinged office; they sit in nylon grain sacks under the banana tree in his yard; they bake on his rooftop under the desert sun. More arrive from various locations every week; the sheikh possesses only a fraction of the records of imprisonment and execution left behind by the old regime.

Men and women come from all over the country to the sheikh's office and comb through the files that his followers have alphabetized, hoping to discover the fate of a lost son or cousin. Though the sheikh denies that he has any political ambition, the service has made him a man to whom Iraqis bring problems and requests.

One afternoon, a doctor arrived from a town about an hour northeast of Baghdad. He said that he was an ear-nose-and-throat specialist; one night in 1995, he was ordered by local Baath Party officials to cut off the ear of a young Army deserter. "I told them it is not probable to do this at night, and I am not ready for this psychologically," he recalled. "They told me, 'You must cut it even if you are cutting it with your teeth—or we will cut *your* ear.' " This punishment was conceived by Saddam Hussein's son Uday, and in the months before Uday turned to other ideas, the doctor severed forty-seven ears.

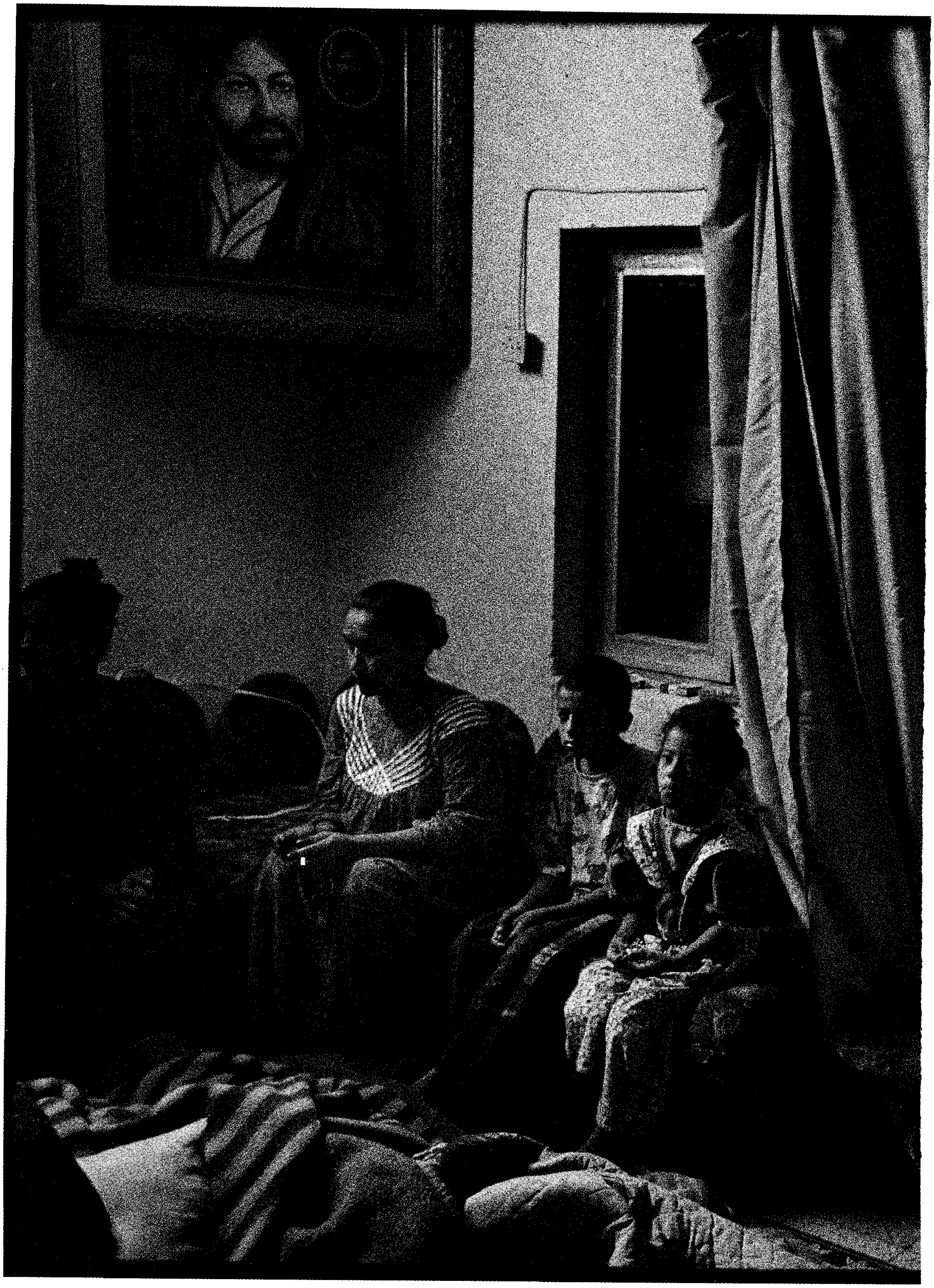
"I had a feeling of nonexistence, a feeling of guilt," he explained. "I am trying to satisfy myself that I had no choice."

The doctor had come to the sheikh's looking for information about his brother, an emotionally disturbed man who was arrested in 1992 for cursing Saddam. "I think he was still alive until last year," the doctor said. He left without finding his brother's file.

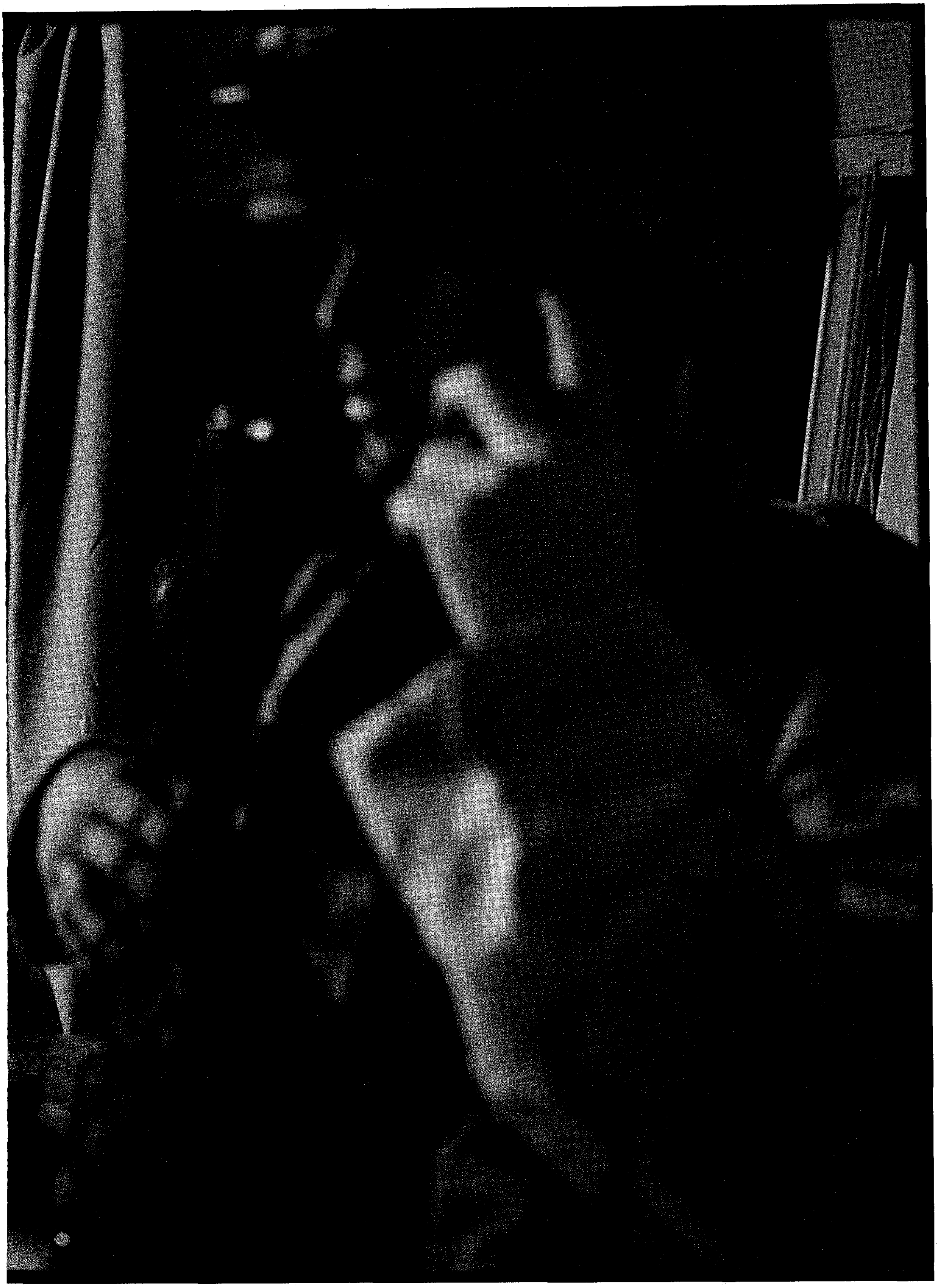
Sheikh al-Din al-Awadi is in his forties, short, round-bellied, dark-complected. He habitually wears a black cloak, white vest and pantaloons, pointed slippers, and a white turban, which signifies a Shiite not descended directly from Muhammad. Though he kept his wife hidden and his forehead bore the dark bruise of fervent prayer—and in his inner office there was a portrait of Ayatollah Khomeini—the sheikh was a worldly man, a sensualist, a lover of impish jokes. He once amused me with a description of a pornographic spy tape that he had somehow obtained, featuring a female Baathist agent seducing a Sudanese diplomat. The bushy beard, the full lips, the bug eyes behind thick black-rimmed glasses, and the sonorous voice prompted me to think of him as Ayatollah Allen Ginsberg.

The sheikh received me on several occasions in his pale-green sitting room, where we were served tea and enormous lunches. "I am one of the regime's victims," he once began—whereupon the power failed, his electric fan died, and the sheikh continued, "and one of the facts of the new regime is that the electricity has gone off." He sat with his legs drawn up in a vinyl swivel chair, sweat pouring from under his turban, and I felt compelled to apologize on behalf of the Americans for the terrible state of Iraq's utilities. His way of sizing me up—eyebrows arched, amusement playing on his lips—suggested from the start that our relationship would be marked by seduction and manipulation.

The sheikh had an agenda: he wanted me to introduce him to important Americans. At our first meeting, he asked, "Did they come here to pay a visit, or did they come to put their hands on the country?" At our second meeting, he welcomed me with a kiss on both cheeks and said, "I like you. I feel that I've known you for years." At our third, he said, "There are hidden bodies swimming in the sky. Maybe our hidden bodies met in the sky before we met each other, and that's why we get along so well." At our fourth, when I came with several C.P.A. officials who



At night in Baghdad, Captain Prior's unit conducts raids to track down former members of Saddam's regime. The Iraqis ha



t of turning each other in, and soldiers are drawn unawares into family feuds.

had thousands of dollars to dole out to groups like his, he exclaimed, "George must have some Arab blood!"

CANE

When the mule balked, he hit him,
sometimes with the flat of a hand
upside the head; more often
the stick he carried did its angry trick.
The mule's job was to power the press,
iron on iron that wrung the sugar
out of cane, circling under the coarse
beam attached to his shoulders and neck.
That mule of my childhood
was black, remains blackly obedient
as round and round he made himself
the splintered hand of a clock, the groan
and squeak of machinery chewing
the reedy stalks to pulp, each second
delivering another sweet thin drop
into the black pot at the center.

He hit him with a rag, old head rag,
but the animal winced only with the thrash
of a cane stalk itself—he squinted

The sheikh was born near the town of Hilla, which is south of Baghdad, into a family of tribal chiefs, and he grew up studying religion at a Shia school of theology in Najaf. He pursued broad interests: Catholic doctrine, the writings of Nostradamus, Arabic poetry, Greek philosophy. In Najaf, he also met and came to admire Iran's Ayatollah Khomeini, who spent his exile there in the late seventies. It was the beginning of Shia political activism in Iraq, and in 1977 the sheikh was arrested at a demonstration in Karbala. After a year, he escaped from prison and ended up in Saudi Arabia. But the Saudi government betrayed him to Iraqi intelligence, he said. He remembers being drugged and sent back in a box to Baghdad, where he endured a year of interrogation at General Security headquarters. He was tried and sentenced to life in prison; before being sent to Abu Ghraib jail, he was beaten with cables for three days. "They wanted to make me taste torture, so that I would know this is a terrorist jail," he said.

The sheikh spent seven years in a special ward, sharing a cell the size of his current sitting room with fifty other men. It was so crowded that they took shifts lying down. Visitors were not allowed. The guards were punished if they failed to show sufficient cruelty. Pen, paper, and books were forbidden.

Yet the sheikh described his prison years with nostalgia, and listening to his tales I began to understand why the religious Shia have been the first Iraqis to seize the new opportunity with purposefulness. In prison, the sheikh became a leader. He settled differences that arose over food and sleeping space. When the guards distributed oranges on Baath Party holidays, the sheikh saved the rinds to treat his own and others' stomach troubles. Using the broken tips of vials of distilled water, he scratched out a theological tract on nylon sacks, and when the known Baathist spies were asleep he preached to his clandestine group. By chance, Abdul Jabbar Doweich, the Islamist member of Prior's neighborhood council, had shared the sheikh's cell through the eighties. The sheikh taught Doweich and the other prisoners about *wilayat al-faqih*, a system of government in which ultimate power resides with one Islamic jurist. Doweich recalled, "In prison I was happy, because I lived under Islam."

The sheikh said that he wanted the Americans to leave fairly soon, but in the meantime he had established good relations with the Army captain responsible for security in his area and had got what he could out of him (a faulty generator). The sheikh was also trying to cultivate Elahé Sharifpour-Hicks, a human-rights officer working at the United Nations offices in Baghdad. The sheikh had given her a wish list; it included eight computers, four vehicles, a guard, a generator, an air-conditioner, and a new building.

Sharifpour-Hicks found the sheikh charming and dangerous. She had grown up in Iran as a revolutionary; she had taken part in the overthrow of the Shah and then seen the mullahs break all their promises of freedom and democracy. She was certain that the same thing was happening in Iraq.

"This ayatollah is hooking the international community by using prisoners' tales," she said. "No one should underestimate these ayatollahs, and I'm afraid the Americans are doing this." As we spoke over lunch at the U.N. cafeteria in Baghdad, she became upset. "There are many like him. The dream, the model, the idea is to come to power the same way as in Iran." She found the Americans' reluctance to interfere maddening; the religious factions were growing stronger, and secular groups were too frightened to make noise. "The Americans are very shy and afraid to look like an occupier. They say, 'Oh, we want the Iraqis to lead.' But what kind of Iraqi should lead?"

The Americans haven't known how to handle the Shia problem. For months, Moqtada al-Sadr, the radical son of a murdered cleric, who has an armed following among unemployed young men in the vast Shiite slum that was once called Saddam City and is now known as Sadr City, was regularly busing his Baghdad followers a hundred miles south to Najaf for Friday prayers, and staging rallies. He runs a newspaper, which in July published the names of a hundred and twenty-four Iraqi "collaborators"—people who worked with the Americans—and at least one was subsequently assassinated. He has pushed his followers toward armed confrontation with the occupiers. In October, al-Sadr declared himself the head of the government of Iraq. The C.P.A. has since taken steps to limit his influence, and in recent weeks al-Sadr has toned down his anti-American rhetoric. But he remains a source of concern. "He is close to the line," Hume Horan, a sen-

under the rule of that bamboo.
The sun was another caning
on his black-hot flesh. He was slow
as the blackstrap syrup the boiled sugar made,
so true to the circle he dragged
we hardly saw him. We loved the rustling
house of green cane, blind in that field
of tropical grasses whose white plumes
announced the long season's wait.
We yearned for the six-foot stem, the eventual
six pieces the machete sliced
at the joints, then the woody exterior
peeled back lengthwise with a blade.
It was a black hand we waited for, his job
to lay bare the grainy fibre we chewed.
That juice on our tongues
was his sweetness at work.
Chester was his name, he kept the mule.

—*Cleopatra Mathis*

ior C.P.A. adviser on religious affairs, said. "The prevailing opinion is that taking him into custody could turn him into a big martyr. But there are those in the C.P.A. who believe that the delay in taking action has allowed the evil genie to escape from the bottle." As for the chances of an Iranian-style theocracy being imposed by the Shia majority in Iraq, Horan said, "Absolutely zero. Not a chance in the world."

When I told the sheikh that the C.P.A. funded Iraqi civic groups like his, he urged me to set up a meeting with Americans and pumped me for advice. "Take my side with them," he pleaded.

Dave Hodgkinson, a former Army lawyer and the C.P.A. official responsible for "transitional justice," went with me on my next visit to Kadhimiya. On the drive from the Green Zone, he said that there was "word on the street" that the sheikh was aligned with extremist Shiite tendencies—perhaps with Moqtada al-Sadr. I asked if that would keep the C.P.A. from funding him. "Only if the money would go for bazookas," Hodgkinson said. "If he's just anti-coalition, if he wants us out, all the better."

In his sitting room, the sheikh regaled us with prison stories. At one point, he was so overcome that he had to excuse himself. When he opened the door to his inner office, I noticed that the Khomeini portrait had disappeared.

Five minutes later, he came back. "I'm sorry to bother you with this conversation," he said.

"It's very important for us to hear," Hodgkinson said sympathetically.

"Let's talk about the prisoners' association," the sheikh said.

"Perfect."

"Do you want me to continue the story, or talk about the association?" the sheikh asked. And there was another half hour of personal history.

The subject of the files created some awkwardness. The Americans wanted the sheikh to acknowledge that the files needed to be put in a centralized storage area, where they could be accessed for the prosecution of crimes against humanity. The sheikh agreed: "But this will take many years, many files will be burned, and many heads will be cut off. So I want to build a storehouse to keep them in—it will be safer because it will be under the care of my tribe."

He saw that he had moved the Americans with his presentation. The C.P.A. soon decided to fund his project. So far, the sheikh has received forty-three thousand dollars in American aid.

The last time I went to see the sheikh, I asked him what kind of government he wanted for Iraq. He ignored the question; there were three C.P.A. cell-phone applications he wanted me to fill out, for himself, his wife, and his six-year-old son. For the first time in my presence, he unwrapped his turban—and suddenly he was a balding, sweaty, pushy man. Our mutual enchantment was coming to an end.

I finished the applications. "Dave Hodgkinson heard you might be a follower of Moqtada al-Sadr," I said.

"Moqtada al-Sadr! He's a small man. He doesn't have a fraction of the level of my religion." The sheikh was convincingly outraged. "Those who said this to Mr. David are my enemy."

I said that Hodgkinson and the C.P.A. didn't seem to care about his politics.

"That's good," he said. "But we must fix this idea about me." I knew that he was worried about his funding. "If it's proved I follow some line or am a member of any political party, I will stop working and sit at home."

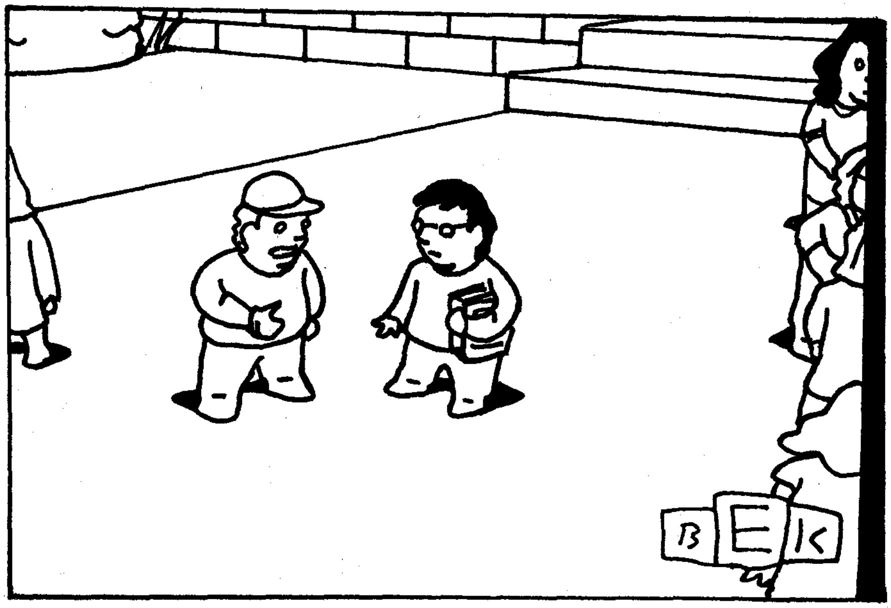
What did he think of Iran's system? I asked.

"Are you working for an intelligence agency?" the sheikh demanded, staring at me with no hint of the charmer's smile. Then he took me rather roughly by the chin. "I'll make you calm by this answer—I'll cool your heart. Trust me, and I'll tell you honestly: I believe in Socrates and his circle. There's a line in the middle." He drew an imaginary line across a wooden coaster that was on his desk. "One side is hot, the other cold. This is the middle. As the philosopher believed, the best is the middle. Is that enough for you, or do you have other questions?"

A few days later, I received an e-mail from Elahé Sharifpour-Hicks. She had gone to see the sheikh that day. "He is in good shape," she reported. "He has now at least two computers and a generator."

THE ADMINISTRATOR

The leisure reading of American officials I met in Iraq tended toward sadly pertinent history: guerrilla wars and botched peace efforts. Colonel William Grimsley, an infantry brigade commander, was reading "A Savage War of Peace," Alistair Horne's study of the French-Algerian conflict. "Lots of similarities to this place," Grimsley told me. A young lieutenant I met had brought a copy of "Four Hours in My Lai." Drew Erdmann



"It's nice to finally be able to put a face to the humiliating nickname."

• •

was bogged down in David Fromkin's "A Peace to End All Peace: The Fall of the Ottoman Empire and the Creation of the Modern Middle East." No one at the C.P.A. had much time to read, though, or to think.

The bookshelves that lined Paul (Jerry) Bremer's office at C.P.A. headquarters were nearly bare when I visited him in August. Rudolph Giuliani's "Leadership" was on one shelf; a book about the management of financial crises was on another, near a box of raisin bran. On Bremer's desk, next to a wood carving inscribed "SUCCESS HAS A THOUSAND FATHERS," were several marked-up reports about postwar Iraq. A pile of maps detailing Iraq's power grid, administrative districts, and railroad lines sat on a coffee table.

Bremer, who is sixty-two, has the thick hair, boyish eyes, and willful jaw of a Kennedy. He was wearing a white shirt with rolled-up sleeves, khakis, and combat boots. An intelligent, disciplined technocrat with an even temperament, Bremer almost always seems focussed on the operational: he has mastered the interconnectedness of Iraq's utilities and can rattle off dozens of budget numbers. A question about the historical precedents for his position led him almost directly to the urgent need for a twenty-kilowatt generator at an oil refinery in Basra. Iraq is a non-stop crisis, and the C.P.A. exists in a temporal as well as a spatial bubble; any attention to the past or to a future beyond thirty days is a luxury.

Bremer speaks directly to Iraqis every week on television and radio. He also meets with dignitaries around the country. He is personally popular and is regarded as modest and hardworking; according to a recent Gallup poll, twice as many Baghdadis approve of him as disapprove. (President Bush, by contrast, has more detractors than supporters.) His approach to the task of leading a chaotic foreign country toward self-rule is largely technical. Under pressure or criticism, he resorts to figures. Throughout the harsh summer, Bremer explained over and over that the power outages came from a lack of capacity in the system, aggravated by looting, sabotage, and the collapse of civil administration. But when he announced in August, "We're going to be thirty to thirty-five per cent short once we get everything working," Iraqis didn't understand why the superpower couldn't do better. (The electricity situation has improved considerably.) When Bremer tells them that they're now free to take responsibility for their own lives, that message, too, often fails to sink in.

Bremer is aware of the deeper problems of the occupation. "You have to understand the psychological situation that Iraqis are in," he said when I asked why Iraqis appeared to appreciate so little of what the C.P.A. has done. "They went from this very dark room to the bright light in three weeks. It's like somebody just threw a switch. And your mentality, if you're an Iraqi, still is: It's the government that fixes things. The government fixed everything before, for better and for worse—they did everything. And here comes a government that can throw out our much-vaunted Army in three weeks, so why can't they fix the electricity in three weeks?"

The psychological gap between Iraqis and the C.P.A. remains wide. Most of Bremer's confidants are Americans. When he leaves the palace, it's necessarily under heavy security. "It is an epistemological problem," one of Bremer's senior advisers said, describing the experience of leaving the Green Zone. "You wonder, 'What's going on out there?' You sniff, and then once you're out you overanalyze."

Of course, the C.P.A.'s isolation and inaccessibility are also partly deliberate. "I've just reorganized the strategic-communications center here," Bremer told me, a day after ordering one of his aides not to speak with me. The situation is compounded by the failure of the C.P.A.'s own news outlet. The Iraq Media Network produces a mixture of C.P.A. announcements and Arabic music videos—programming so reminiscent of TV under Saddam's regime that most Iraqis get their information from Al Jazeera and Iranian broadcasts instead. The C.P.A. has thus far squandered the chance to begin the civic education that will be vital for Iraq's transition to democracy. As with so many other aspects of the occupation, the origins of the problem lie in Washington: the insipid programming reflects the Pentagon's desire to proclaim freedom in Iraq without doing the harder, riskier work of helping Iraqis create the necessary institutions. In this sense, the intellectual failures of the planning continue to haunt the occupation.

One searing day, I joined Bremer's press pool, following him by Chinook helicopter as he hopscotched across the southern desert. The first stop was a maternity hospital in Diwaniyah; its former director, a gynecologist, now serves on the Governing Council, the American-appointed Iraqi interim authority. Bremer, who forces himself to endure a suit and tie at public appearances, was received by local dignitaries in kaffiyehs. He told hem, "We of the coalition are glad that ve were able to provide you with your reedom from the dictatorship of Sadlam Hussein. You now have that freelom and you now have a better hope for he future." He recited a long list of staistical improvements in Iraq's health-care ystem, and concluded: "In May, five hunlred tons of drugs were shipped in. Last nonth, we shipped thirty-five hundred ons—a seven-hundred-per-cent increase n shipments in three months."

The dignitaries applauded. In turn, hey presented Bremer with lengthy suplications. Then he paid a visit to the vards upstairs. Bremer travels with a coningent of aides and security guards; this halanx swept down the second-floor iallway past startled doctors and into ooms where even more startled mothers ind infants lay in beds. His aides gave iim stuffed animals to present to the paients. In one room, a skeletal baby lay n its mother's arms. On a nearby bed, a oddler lolled against its mother's body, nouth open. This was sickness, maybe ven the approach of death, not childirth. The smile died on Bremer's face. I don't like seeing this at all," he said, ind asked the photographer to stop takng pictures.

Downstairs, I fell into conversation vith a couple of young doctors. They said hat the electricity was on only because we vere here—it had been off all week. The nterruptions to power had doubled inant mortality here: without proper incuation, the rate was now seven to ten leaths per day. The hospital had several roken generators; a Marine Corps reervist had told me that with twenty housand dollars in repairs the generators ould provide the hospital the power it ieeded. The infant-mortality rate would e cut by half.

Christopher Harvin, one of Bremer's ress aides, gravitated toward us. "Are you iappy with Saddam gone?" he asked the oung doctors. "You are happy that he's one? Things are better now?"

"Yes," Dr. Kassim al-Janaby said, musering a smile. "Yes."

"What's the best thing about Sadlam being gone?" asked Harvin, pushng the conversation back on message.

"Only one—I think only one," Dr. Mohamed Jasim said. "Only the free talking. Only only only. But no doing. No doing."

"Do you think over time it gets much better?"

"Yes, we are thinking the next time it gets better," Jasim said.

"Patience? Yeah?"

"We need continuous electricity," Dr. al-Janaby said flatly. "Security in our city also is not until now. That's it. Also the salary."

Harvin, a veteran of George W. Bush's primary campaign in South Carolina, was undeterred. "But don't you think with time it will get better? What can we do?"

"Security," one of them said.

"Americans? Iraqis? Both working together?"

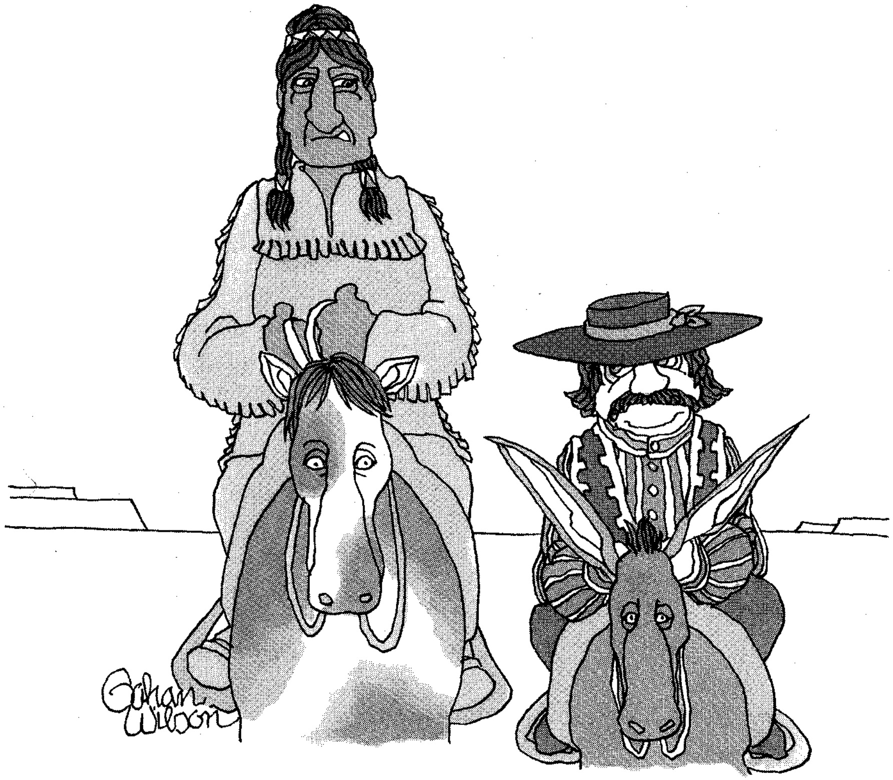
"Yes."

"So . . . the economy will stabilize the looting?"

Bremer's C.P.A., like any government, tries to control news coverage—I received five separate official e-mails alerting me to the arrival of a shipment of fifty-four thousand soccer balls at Baghdad International Airport—and officials complain that the press has failed to present the positive side of the Iraq story. There is some truth to the charge that journalists focus on bad news in Iraq (as they do everywhere), covering the rising daily death toll and street protests more energetically than sewer repairs.

At the same time, the C.P.A.'s good news doesn't always bear scrutiny. The health figures that Bremer cited at the Diwaniyah hospital were undercut by a chance conversation I had the next day with Dr. Jean-Bernard Bouvier, then of the British medical charity Merlin. The Ministry of Health had become an empty shell, without central control, Bouvier told me. Nobody had any information about inventory at the warehouses of the central pharmacy. "They said they've put out six hundred tons—of what?" he asked. "If it's twelve trucks of I.V. fluid, I don't give a damn." According to Bouvier, sixteen tons of drugs were dumped on a single clinic, and the stacks of boxes left no room for patients.

Two months earlier, Bouvier had drawn up an Emergency National Distribution Plan for Drugs; he had heard no response from the coalition. (His suggestions, which were supported by the World Health Organization, were eventually rejected.) A veteran of many disasters, he found that the expertise of organizations like his kept falling into a void at the C.P.A. "They don't see the fragility of the system," he said. "It's not that children are starving yet, but it's a structure that is



"I'll tell you what I really think about the Lone Ranger if you tell me what you really think about Don Quixote."

slowly crumbling. You can degrade a society bit by bit, but then you reach a point where you just crash."

In the view of many critics, Bremer's decision to abolish the Iraqi Army and purge high-level Baathists from the civil administration only added to the tumult in Iraq. As Jay Garner put it, the immediate result of the May 16th order was the creation of "four hundred thousand new enemies." Even some of Bremer's advisers now acknowledge that cutting loose an army with guns and without pay was a serious mistake. The C.P.A. reinstated salaries on a six-month basis after deadly demonstrations outside the Assassin's Gate, but the damage to security and pride was already done. One of Garner's lieutenants, who had been working closely with Iraqi officers, was shocked by Bremer's dissolution order. "From the Iraqi viewpoint, that simple action took away the one symbol of sovereignty the Iraqi people still had," he said. "That's when we stopped being liberators and became occupiers."

To others, such as Barham Salih, the Kurdish leader, the mistake was in the manner of implementation, not in the order itself. "You cannot build a new Iraq while retaining that instrument of repression," he said. Earlier this month, Bremer seemed to acknowledge that abolishing the Army had not been a good idea when he ordered that the recruitment and training of a new Army be speeded up.

Bremer's de-Baathification order similarly put at least thirty-five thousand civil servants—engineers, professors, managers—out of work. The firings were based on rank, not conduct, and, inevitably, qualified Iraqis lost their jobs just when their expertise was needed most. American soldiers told me that the deputy director of the Baghdad Zoo, a Baathist, had been the hardest worker on the staff.

Whatever the bureaucratic and human cost, Bremer's May 16th order was a symbolic break with the totalitarian past, and the Baath Party went the way of the Nazi Party. For Drew Erdmann, who had to fire more than sixteen hundred Baathist university professors and staff members in May, this is one area where the German analogy is apt, and he bristles at any notion that academic freedom might be at issue. "In June, 1945, you're not going to have a discussion about the legitimacy of the Nazi ideology," he said. "It's not academic here! The people are still living next door, working next door, on campus, they're still around, they're still threatening."

Erdmann explained his support for de-Baathification by telling me about the "Saddam bonus." On the scale of the dictator's crimes, the Saddam bonus was a minor yet illuminating atrocity. Under Iraq's college-admissions system, students were ranked by test scores, and, with thousands applying for a limited number of openings, a few points made a great difference. The Saddam bonus awarded ten extra points to high-school boys who married widows of the Iran-Iraq War—women often twice their age. The last Baathist Minister of Higher Education under Saddam had withdrawn the points of certain applicants after determining that the marriages were fraudulent. "These guys came to me so they could get back their bonus points," Erdmann explained. "Me, the American coalition guy! They think I'm going to give them fricking Saddam bonus points for a fake marriage?" Baathism, he concluded, had "penetrated in such a twisted way" that a strong response was required.

The day after Bremer's de-Baathification order, Erdmann went to Baghdad University, in the city's south, at a bend in the Tigris. Baathist university presidents across Iraq had been dismissed, and Erdmann had decided that new administrations should be elected by the faculties. (Nominees had to be approved by the C.P.A.) These would be among the very first elections in Iraq, and they were not without risk. Erdmann's reasons were both practical and principled. "Look, I don't know what the hell is going on at any particular university," he explained. "With the bad communications all over the country, we couldn't go to each one and make the appointments in any informed manner. But the principle of getting the faculty involved—it's real. It's not for show." Seven hundred people jammed Baghdad University's sweltering auditorium, and when the votes were counted the faculty had elected as president a biochemist who was widely respected for his integrity under Saddam. "You had people coming out of there saying, 'This is the first time we've seen anything like this,' " Erdmann remembered. As for the deposed university president, a high-ranking Baathist physician, he was shot dead tw
months later at his clinic while writin
a prescription.

One morning, I accompanied Erdmann to Baghdad University. Unt
that day, I never quite understood hi
constant tension, his irritability, his ferocity about remnants of the old regim
the sense he conveyed that this was sti
a kind of combat. His team travelled i
two civilian cars, staying in radio contac
in the seat next to me, Erdmann shove
a clip into his 9-mm. Beretta. The campus was largely empty—it was the summer recess—but there was a group c
about thirty men standing under a tree i
the plaza near the parking lot. They wer
de-Baathified professors, and as Erdmann walked past, his pistol hidde
under his shirt, three of them fell int
step with him.

"Are you Dr. Andrew Erdmann?" on
professor said. "We have some forms.
The men looked middle-aged, neat
dressed, and downcast. They displaye
copies of the Agreement to Disavo
Party Membership, with their signature

"The only exceptions are granted b
Ambassador Bremer," Erdmann tol
them.

"We need your help about the situation."

"I understand the disruption in you
life. But I hope you understand the coalition's May 16th proclamation."

"But we've done absolutely nothin
that—"

Erdmann said that he couldn't promise anything. "Some of your colleague
don't deserve exemption," he said. "Som
should return and some should not."

"I realize that," the professor said. "Bu
our income now is absolutely zero. W
can do absolutely nothing. There is n
job we can do."

The men under the tree were watchin
us. One of Erdmann's Iraqi colleague
from the C.P.A. said, "Let's keep moving.

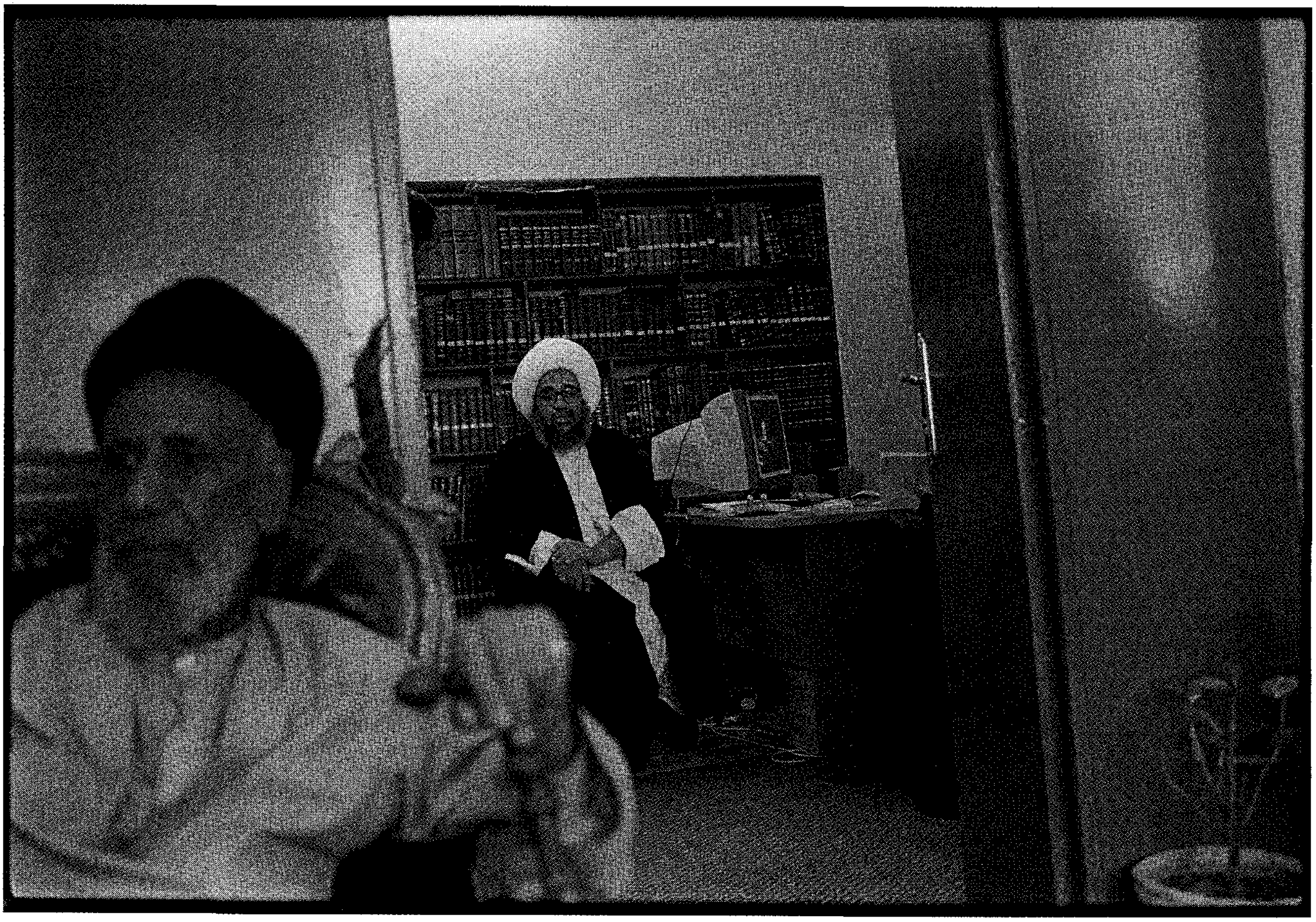
Another Iraqi approached. "Let's ge
out of here," Erdmann said. "I'm about t
have a serious sense-of-humor deficit.
We walked away, toward a white pillar a
the edge of the plaza. Behind it was
glassed-in cafeteria. An anti-Baathis
poster was taped to a wall: "THERE IS N
ROOM HERE FOR THOSE WHOSE HAND
DRIP WITH THE BLOOD OF INNOCENTS.

"This is where it happened," Erdmann said. "This corner. The body was lying there. I pulled the car up here."

Around noon on July 6th, while Erdmann was meeting with UNESCO representatives in the building across the plaza, Jeffrey Wershow, an infantryman assigned to provide him security, walked alone into the cafeteria with his helmet off and bought a ginger ale. Wershow was an only child, a lawyer's son with an interest in politics; he was a specialist in the Florida National Guard. Wershow was standing near the pillar, holding his ginger ale, when a man approached and shot him in the head. The assassin, who is thought to be a Yemeni engineering student, disappeared into a crowd of students. By the time Erdmann sprinted across the plaza, shouting, his gun drawn, soldiers had cleared the crowd and wrapped Wershow's head wound. They placed him in the back of Erdmann's Chevy Suburban, and Erdmann drove off the campus to an improvised landing zone. Wershow was alive when the helicopter arrived, but he died before reaching a military hospital.

That evening, Erdmann tried to clean the bloodstains out of the car with detergent. He and his superiors agreed that he should go back to campus the next day. ("I can't let the last image of us be tearing out of town," Erdmann thought at the time.) Whenever he ran into a soldier from Wershow's unit, Erdmann would say to himself, "One of them got killed because of me." He told me, "That's the way I feel. I don't necessarily think that's the way they feel—I wouldn't put that on them—but that's what happened."

Erdmann, recounting the story two weeks later in his trailer behind the palace, smiled in his mirthless way. "Guy got killed so I could go and talk to some people from UNESCO."



Sheikh Emad al-Din al-Awadi, who was imprisoned by the Baathists, is one of many Iraqis seeking American aid.

"WE ARE STILL AFRAID"

Dr. Baher Butti is a small, nebbishy man of forty-three who treats patients in crisis at the Ibn Rushd Teaching Psychiatric Hospital, in central Baghdad. He also dispenses antidepressants and antipsychotics of some previous generation to the long-term cases in a locked hospital at the city's eastern edge. Dr. Butti sees private patients as well, and he's made it his goal to offer sensitive therapy in a country where psychological care hasn't always been distinguishable from the methods of the security police.

Dr. Butti is Christian but thoroughly secular; a worrier, he keenly feels Iraq's isolation from the modern world under Saddam, and is concerned by the rising danger of Islamic fundamentalism. Like many members of the urban, downwardly mobile middle class, he doesn't know which way to turn: he is equally distrustful of the American occupiers and of new Iraqi political movements. He once attended a meeting with C.P.A. officials on the subject of forming local nonprofit organizations, and concluded that to get funding he needed to be a fundamentalist.

With a few old classmates from Baghdad's Jesuit High School, Dr. Butti was setting up the Baghdad Rehabilitation and Development Group. One of its proposals was the construction of the Gilgamesh Center for Creative Thinking. In the prospectus, Dr. Butti wrote, with perhaps a bit of self-criticism:

> A great number of Iraqi people are suffering a great deal because of the severed communication with the civilized world, they suffer from lacking the ability to communicate with the others, they have lost the hope in the future, they suspect anything foreign, they are not sufficient in their professional performance, they don't feel enough responsibility towards the society, they lack the power to experience freedom, they don't comprehend the correct performance of democracy, they cannot deal with group working . . . etc. Rebuilding what the war has destroyed is a simple effort if compared with the task of rebuilding the distorted human person.

The Gilgamesh Center, Butti wrote, would be a place where Iraqis could learn such skills as "logical and rational thinking," "how to dialogue and discuss with others," and "secrets of the successful negotiation." It was hard to think of a better idea for the reconstruction of Iraq, but, unlike Sheikh Emad al-Din al-Awadi, Dr. Butti was having trouble finding money.

"They lack the power to experience freedom": the phrase helps explain why the moment of good feeling was so short after the liberation of Baghdad. Iraqis were told they were free, they expected to be free, they had been waiting for years to be free—but they still didn't feel free. And so a depression set in almost at once. Akila al-Hashemi, a former diplomat and one of three women who was appointed to serve on the Governing Council, told me that she represented "independent liberal democrats"—what she called "the silent group." Al-Hashemi said, "We are still under the shock, we are still afraid." She was fifteen in 1968, when the Baath Party took power. "Now I'm fifty. You see? You can imagine—can I change in two days, in two months, in two years? We need to be reëducated, rehabilitated." She said of her constituents, "They were happy after the fall of the regime. But then there was an act of sabotage against this joy, against this happiness. It's not accomplished, you see. This feeling you have—ah, yes!—but then it's not accomplished. This is frustrating."

In April, a young exile named Ammar Al Shahbander returned to Baghdad full of high hopes and bold ideas, only to find his countrymen stuck. "They are so normalized to the Baath and the fear and the death and the terror that they can't see the advantages now," he said. "When you tell them they have such a great opportunity to express their opinion, they don't give a damn. They don't have anything to express."

In downtown Baghdad, I met a stage director named Abdulillah Kamal, who sat smoking with a group of actors in the front office of his two-thousand-seat theatre. Kamal was about to resume performances of the play that had been showing when the bombs started to fall, in March. I asked why he didn't stage something that he couldn't have under Saddam, something new—for example, a satire of the occupation. He brushed the notion aside. "The play is out on the street. All Baghdad is a theatre. We are the audience. We don't need to do a play." But it would pack the house, I said, and it would give Iraqis the bonding experience of art. "Could I talk about Bremer and Bush?" the director asked skeptically. I was unable to persuade Kamal that a satire wouldn't be censored—but I also sensed that the idea made him uneasy for deeper reasons. It would demand an act of imaginative courage that was probably beyond his power. Finally, Kamal confided that he had in fact written a new play. It was called "Masonica," crossing "Masonry" with "America." He told me that the play would reveal the "hidden thing that happened in America on 11th September." Apparently, a conspiracy theory was as far as Kamal's mind would go.

The thousands of foreign soldiers, officials, contractors, and humanitarians working in Iraq often find themselves in the position of the American sea captain in Melville's novella "Benito Cereno," who cries to the Spaniard he has rescued from a slave mutiny, "You are saved, you are saved: what has cast such a shadow upon you?" But in Iraq, alongside the paranoid theories and the justifiable fears harbored by the "distorted human person," I constantly encountered an intense longing for some nameless, better future—especially among young people.

When I was at Baghdad University, I met two young women in the hallway of the administration building. "We must go out of Iraq!" one of them, Aseel Hatem Shouket, exclaimed. "We must travel! We must see America! Can you give us hope?"

Shouket is a pale, pretty twenty-eight-year-old computer programmer who works for the university administration. Her cream-colored veil seemed incongruous, given her vitality, and in fact it was just a prop: she wore it to keep from being killed by fundamentalists.

There were many fears in Shouket's life. She was afraid of kidnappers: a group of them had snatched her friend as she got off the bus; Shouket had barely managed to run away. She was afraid of her neighbors, who said that they would harm her if she took another picture of American soldiers. She was afraid of the woman

"He'll finish your nap for you."

who ran her office, a former Baathist who used to wear a uniform and sidearm to work, and whose three framed photographs of Saddam were still propped up on the floor, facing the wall.

"Do you feel danger here? I feel danger," Shouket said as we spoke in her office. "I feel a life in prison—after liberation! I want to see the world, I want to learn more, I want to feel I'm getting something important for my life." She paused. "Danger is still in the streets. In this room. Especially in this room."

The office manager walked in and glared. She told Shouket that I would have to leave.

"I have no freedom," Shouket whispered.

I offered to drive Shouket home. She lived with her parents and an uncle who had become mentally ill after imprisonment and torture. Their modest house, in an underbuilt new neighborhood of eastern Baghdad, stood baking in the relentless yellow light of midday. They served me a dish of rice and beans.

During the war, Shouket's mother had written a Koranic verse in chalk on the living-room wall; it was a prayer for safety that the family recited together. On another wall hung a photograph of her mother's parents, from 1948—a man with a small mustache, a woman with bright lipstick.

"During royal times, the people were more modern than now," Shouket's father said. He was an architect in the Ministry of Information. In 1965, he had studied in Manchester, England, but the family now belonged to Iraq's beaten-down middle class.

Before the war, Shouket's pay had been six dollars a month; the Americans raised it to a hundred and twenty dollars. The family passionately supported the Americans. If this was colonialism, Shouket was ready to be colonized. She had wept watching the war on TV, urging the 3rd Infantry Division on to Baghdad; the bombs exploding outside had given her heart. Now, every Saturday, the family sat down together and listened to Bremer's weekly address. "I feel him very close," Shouket said. "Even his way, I like it—he's a simple man."

"The Americans should change the region," Shouket's father said. He predicted that Iranians would be inspired to revolt "if they saw what happened in Iraq, and we progress by liberation and wealthy life."

Her veil off, Shouket wore her hennaed hair in a long braid. She brought out her large collection of American movies—she had learned English from watching Nicole Kidman in "Moulin Rouge" and Sharon Stone in "The Quick and the Dead." She said, "It needs time, I think, a very long time, to make connection between the two civilizations. To make us civilized, I mean."

Shouket sat on the couch between her sad-faced parents and talked excitedly about her future. "I'm always saying to my mother, 'I lost my life.' And she says, 'No, you're young, there's still time.' And I say, 'Maybe.' Maybe now I'll catch the rest of my life to see the world." She went on, "I want to leave Baghdad, I want to be free. Just improving myself—my mind, my way of life."

Her mother was on the verge of tears; her parents were afraid for her to leave Iraq. Shouket put her arm around her mother and touched her father's hand. "He believes in me," she said.

When I rose to leave, they offered me their family heirlooms. I declined by saying that the gifts would be confiscated at the Jordanian border. Outside, Shouket's mad uncle was pacing, holding a glass in his hand. I was thinking how isolated the family seemed. They had no political party or religious militia, no ayatollah or tribal sheikh; they had only the Americans, who didn't know of their existence. Shouket had never spoken to a foreigner before the morning we met. She wanted to travel, but she was too frightened to go into town and set up an e-mail account at an Internet café. The pressure of her yearning filled the small room.

At the door, Shouket smiled. "Do you think my dreams will come true?"

THE ENVOY

Nobody searched me on the August day I went to the Canal Hotel, where the United Nations had its offices, to see Sergio Vieira de Mello, the Secretary-General's special representative in Iraq. His staff occupied a hall on the third floor, but before going to Vieira de Mello's corner suite I stopped to talk with his political adviser, a Lebanese professor and former culture minister named Ghassan Salamé. Vieira de Mello and Salamé had met only a few months earlier, when the career international civil servant from Brazil asked the political veteran from Beirut to help him in what seemed to be an impossible assignment: representing the U.N. in occupied Iraq under a Security Council resolution that gave it no real authority. "He said he knew nothing of Iraq," Salamé said, "and less of me."

It had been a particularly bad week in Iraq: continuing power failures, numerous ambushes, explosions at an oil pipeline in Kirkuk and a water main in Baghdad, fatal riots in Basra, and a devastating car bomb at the Jordanian Embassy.

Salamé was thinking about the situation historically. "My deep feeling is that the problem is not in Baghdad but in Washington," he said. "Those who decided this war and did it and won it are not the type of Americans Arab countries have been used to in the past fifty years. This is not the Corps of Engineers, this is not the American pragmatist." Salamé, a brusque man whose thick black eyebrows blend together, fiddled with a strand of gold worry beads. "They are new Americans, Americans with an ideology, with a master plan, with interests—missionaries."

I pointed out that these new Americans were not unlike some of the old Americans who had fought the Cold War. Salamé seized on the comparison. "When I listen to Mr. Wolfowitz, I feel that he mistakes Baghdad for Berlin in 1945," he said. "He doesn't know the place." Salamé was particularly critical of the C.P.A.'s efforts to transform the Iraqi economy. "This country does not need at all the kind of sweeping privatization that these guys back in Washington are looking for."

Vieira de Mello's office was at the end of the hall, overlooking a service road and a nearly completed security wall built to within one metre of the hotel. When I walked in, he had his jacket off, but as he sat down across from me at a coffee table his perfectly pressed suit pants, sky-blue shirt, sleek gray hair, and resonant film actor's voice confirmed his reputation as an elegant diplomat. Vieira de Mello's U.N. career had taken him from Cambodia and Rwanda to overseeing the early reconstruction of Kosovo, and, finally, to playing a role in East Timor similar to that of Paul Bremer in Iraq.

Upon arriving in Baghdad in early June, Vieira de Mello tried to help the

Americans out of the trap in which they found themselves, and to help the Iraqis. Bremer, having taken charge of a project in jeopardy, seemed unwilling to loosen his grip. An advisory council of Iraqis with no substantive powers was the only proposal on the table other than complete American control.

"My message from Day One, to them and to Jerry Bremer in particular, was: This won't fly," Vieira de Mello said. He told Bremer that the council needed executive powers. "You've got to give them responsibilities, even though you might be ultimately challenged."

Vieira de Mello, Salamé, and others began having conversations with leading Iraqis around the country. It was this effort that expanded the ranks of what became the Governing Council, adding people who had lived under Saddam and represented constituencies inside Iraq. Vieira de Mello's task required all his diplomatic skill. He once spent hours convincing a representative from the main Shiite group that joining the council would not be political suicide. When Bremer objected to the appointment of a Communist, Vieira de Mello got him to change his mind, arguing that it was vital to include secular Iraqis. In mid-July, the new twenty-five-member Governing Council became the first indigenous authority in Iraq since the fall of Saddam. "Over half would not have been there if Jerry could have had it his own way," Vieira de Mello said.

So far, he admitted, the Governing Council had functioned "in a kind of cocoon"; ordinary Iraqis weren't sure what it was for. Nonetheless, he was confident that the council would eventually succeed. "I wouldn't be touring countries in the region trying to sell the Governing Council if I didn't believe what I'm saying," he said. "Because the last thing I need and the organization needs is to be marketing the interests of the United States."

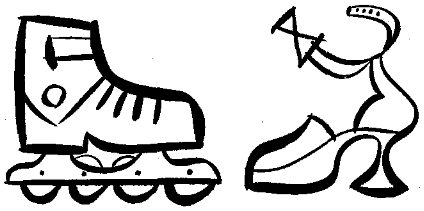
He outlined an ambitious timetable for the full transfer of sovereignty to Iraqis: interim ministers and a constitutional commission by the end of 2003; a new constitution by early 2004; general elections in the spring. During this period, he said, the U.N. would play an increasingly central role in the reconstruction.

As the Secretary-General's representative in Iraq, Vieira de Mello had reason to snipe at the Bush Administration, which had spent much of the past year ridiculing, bullying, and snubbing the U.N. In Iraq, the U.N.'s profile was so low that Vieira de Mello admitted feeling irritated and embarrassed by his "total lack of authority." But, because he was pragmatic, and because he had once been in Bremer's role, he refused to be churlish. "I don't want to be unfair to people who are up against an almost impossible task, having myself done similar things," he said.

I asked how greater U.N. involvement early on might have changed the situation in Iraq. "We could have helped, and we would have been only too happy to do so, also pointing to our own mistakes—because unless you admit why things went wrong you won't be heard," he said. "We could probably have done that. We still can. There's still time." He looked at his watch; in a few minutes he had a press conference downstairs.

Six days later, at 4:30 P.M. on August 19th, a flatbed truck pulled up alongside the new security wall under Vieira de Mello's office. American forces had blocked off the road with a five-ton truck, but the U.N., because it was uncomfortable with a heavy military presence, had asked that the obstacle be removed. Vieira de Mello was sitting at the coffee table with several staff members and visitors when a thousand-kilogram bomb exploded. At eight-fifteen that evening, as soldiers helped clear away the rubble, Ghassan Salamé identified the body of his friend.

Twenty-one others died with Sergio Vieira de Mello. Ten days later, at the end of Friday prayers, an even more powerful car bomb killed Ayatollah Muhammad Bakr al-Hakim, the spiritual leader of the largest Shia party, and ninety-four others, outside the holiest mosque of Shia Islam, in Najaf. And on September 20th Akila al-Hashemi was shot in the abdomen as she left her house to drive to a meeting of the Governing Council; she died five days later. By the beginning of November, the number of foreign U.N. personnel in Iraq had dwindled from six hundred and fifty people to about forty, with none in Baghdad.



"SOME TYPE OF DEMOCRACY"

Drew Erdmann left Baghdad in late July, for meetings in Washington and to see his wife, in St. Louis. They spent a beautiful Saturday morning walking through the dazzling green of an organic market, but he felt remote, as if he were looking at the world through a thick pane of glass. He woke up every morning before dawn, just as he did in Baghdad, feeling the stress of what remained to be done. It was nearly impossible to tell his wife what he'd been doing. He felt dizzy, his hands shook with nervous energy, and he wanted to get back to Iraq.

Erdmann had been offered a position at the National Security Council in Washington, as Director for Iran and Strategic Planning. When he returned to Baghdad in August, he told me that he didn't want to leave Iraq, but, because it meant being closer to his wife, he would take the job.

I saw him recently in Washington. He wouldn't talk about his current work, but, in any case, the only subject that interested him was Iraq. His debriefing at the White House had lasted only a few minutes. "They don't like us much, but they like the alternatives less," he told Condoleezza Rice, and the conversation moved on. He found that no one in Washington, in or out of government, really understood what it was like in Iraq. The gap between headquarters and the field, he said, is profound. "I sound like 'It's Khe Sanh, damn it! Charlie's inside the wire!'" he said, laughing grimly and adopting a Dennis Hopper tremor. *"You don't understand, man!"*

Erdmann could point to certain successes in his own sector: the resumption, in October, of Fulbright scholarships will help restore intellectual connections between Iraq and the world. He said that he was still unable to think as a historian. He joked that he hoped never to write a book on Iraq called "Strange Defeat."

This fall in Baghdad, terror bombings, assassinations, and firefights have become common occurrences. According to the Pentagon, around five thousand guerrilla fighters are responsible for the violence. In mid-October, Captain John Prior was driving by the Baghdad

Hotel when a car bomb exploded, killing ix Iraqis. As the ranking officer, he set up a cordon and helped evacuate the dead and wounded. He told me that Iraqis who might have countenanced attacks on American soldiers were bewildered by the recent bombings: "They don't understand why Iraqis are being killed."

Perhaps the escalating terrorism in Baghdad will drive Iraqis toward their occupiers. But it seems equally possible that the mayhem will be blamed on the continuing American presence. A classified C.I.A. memo sent to the White House ast week brought the grim news that more Iraqis were supporting the insurgency—and that many believed that it would force the United States out. Last week, the Pentagon tried to indicate its resolve: Lieutenant General Ricardo Sanchez, the commander of coalition forces in Iraq, pointedly used the word "war" for the first time to describe the guerrilla attacks, promising an aggressive campaign in Baghdad to restore order. Shortly after Sanchez's announcement, I received an e-mail from Aseel Shouket, who seemed unconvinced. She wrote, "We are very afraid of the thought that the Americans would leave under pressure."

Not long ago, I met Ghassan Salamé in the lobby of U.N. headquarters in New York. He was helping Secretary-General Kofi Annan frame a new international consensus on Iraq. The debate is now about timetables for restoring sovereignty to the Iraqis. Salamé was proposing a swift return to Iraqi self-rule, but cautioned that the country was not ready for elections. Those Iraqis who wanted democracy and not just power were telling Salamé that elections would consolidate the hold of the most sectarian and extremist groups; the moderates had barely begun to organize.

The Bush Administration is pursuing a different approach. Last week, Bremer was urgently recalled from Baghdad for talks in Washington. During a meeting, he was reportedly told that the C.P.A.'s timetable, which was to delay elections and self-rule until the creation of a new Iraqi constitution, needed to be abandoned. The White House now seems determined to move up elections to the middle of 2004; it is also considering the creation of a new sovereign body of Iraqis that would supersede the Governing Council, perhaps by the end of the year.

"They're especially bold at this time of year."

• •

But an accelerated timetable for Iraqi elections, along with the C.P.A.'s hurried attempts to recruit a new Iraqi Army, suggests that the hunt is on for an "exit strategy" as America enters its own election year. There is no reason to think that turning things over to divided Iraqi politicians and inexperienced troops will lead to a better outcome. If the Administration hastily adopts policies in order to claim success in Iraq, it will have returned to the wishful thinking that helped make the occupation a continuous crisis.

"Iraq needs to be liberated—liberated from big plans," Salamé said. "Every time people mentioned it in the last few years, it was to connect it to big ideas—the war against W.M.D.s, solving the Arab-Israeli conflict, the war against terrorism, a model of democracy. That's why all these mistakes are made. They're made because Iraq is always, in someone's mind, the first step to something else."

In our last conversation in Washington, Drew Erdmann said that it made no sense to claim any certainty about how Iraq will emerge from this ordeal. "I'm very cautious about dealing with anyone talking about Iraq who's absolutely sure one way or the other," he said.

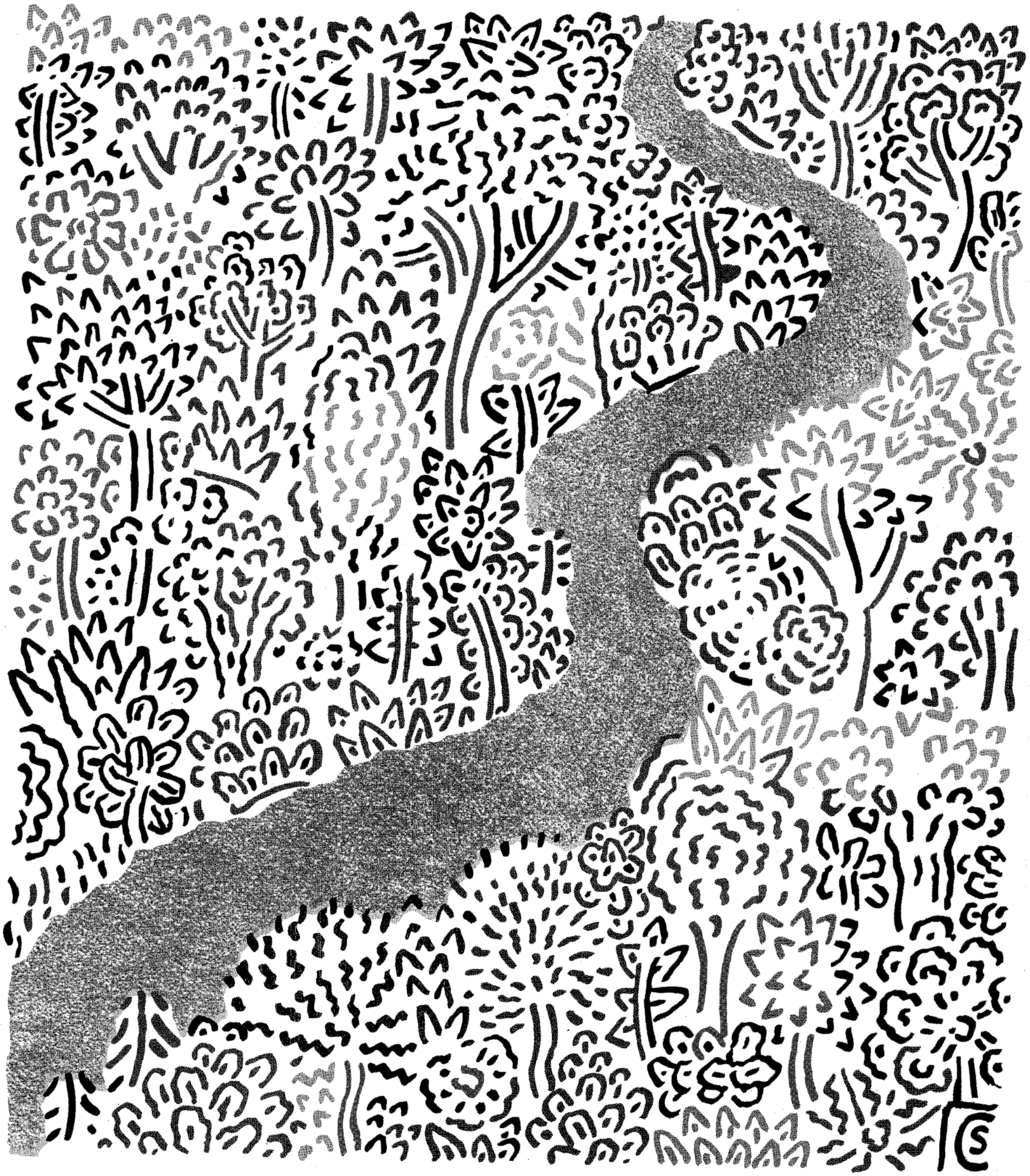
Before we parted, I asked Erdmann how he would define success in Iraq. His answer was humbler than the official "End State" declaration that had been affixed to his office wall in Baghdad. Still, given the concrete realities of what is now happening in Iraq, it was enormously ambitious.

"Success will be if there's a private sphere where they have some real choice in what they do with their lives, and a public sphere where they can have some control over their destiny and the state doesn't visit arbitrary violence on them," he said. "This means some type of democracy. It won't be Jeffersonian democracy, with farmers plowing the godforsaken sands outside of Nasiriya. Some would say, 'That's modest.' But it isn't. It will be huge. And it'll be something uniquely Iraqi. They don't have to love us, or even like us—why should they? We liberated them, but the fact that we had to do it adds to the trauma of coming out of decades of totalitarian rule. It's difficult for us. We look at ourselves and say, 'We have really good motives and try to do the right thing and why don't people appreciate it?' That's an American thing. Few Iraqis are ever going to step forward and say, 'I really love the C.P.A.' They'll have to live here long after we're gone. They have legitimate interests, and we shouldn't treat them as children—they're not. If in five or ten years they can look back on this period and believe that they're better off, then things will be O.K. We'll be able to move beyond this period to where things are normal between the United States and Iraq." He paused and shrugged. "In a way, success will be if the Iraqis don't hate us." ♦

FICTION

TRESPASS

BY JULIAN BARNES



When he and Cath broke up, he thought about joining the Ramblers, but it seemed too obviously sad a thing to do. He could imagine the conversation:

"Hi, Geoff. Sorry to hear about you and Cath. How're you doing?"

"Oh, fine, thanks. I've joined the Ramblers."

"Good move."

He could see the rest of it, too: getting the magazine, studying the open-to-all invitation—"meet 10:30, Saturday 12th, in car park immed. SE of Methodist Chapel"—then cleaning his boots the night before, cutting an extra sandwich just in case, maybe taking an extra tangerine as well, and turning up at the car park with (despite all his warnings to himself) a hopeful heart. A hopeful heart waiting to be bruised. And so it would be a case of getting through the walk, saying cheery farewells, and then home to eat the leftover sandwich and tangerine for his supper. Now, that would be sad.

Of course, he carried on walking. Most weekends, in most weathers, he'd be out with his boots and pack, his water bottle and his map. Nor was he going to keep away from the walks he'd done with Cath. They weren't "their" walks, after all; and, if they were, wouldn't he be reclaiming them by doing them by himself? She didn't own the circuit from Calver: along the Derwent, through Froggatt Woods to Grindleford, perhaps a diversion to the Grouse Inn for lunch, then past the Bronze Age stone circle, lost in summer months amid the bracken, to the grand surprise of Curbar Edge, and home again. She didn't own that; nobody did.

Afterward, he made a note in his walking log: "2hrs 45mns." With Cath, it used to take 3hrs 30mns, and an extra 30mns if they went to the Grouse for a sandwich. That was one of the things about being single: you saved time. You walked quicker, you got home and drank a beer quicker, you ate your supper quicker. And then the sex you had with yourself, that was quicker, too. You gained all this extra time, Geoff thought—extra time in which to be lonely. Stop that, he told himself. You aren't allowed to be a sad person; you're only allowed to be sad.

"I thought we were going to get married."

"That's why we aren't," Cath had replied.

"I don't understand."

"No, you don't."

"Will you please explain?"

"No."

"Why not?"

"Because that's the whole point. If you can't see, if I have to explain, that's *why* we're not getting married."

"You're not being logical."

"I'm also not getting married."

Forget it, forget it, it's gone. On the one hand, she liked having you make the decisions; on the other, she found you controlling. On the one hand, she liked living with you; on the other, she didn't want to go on living with you. On the one hand, she knew you'd be a good father; on the other, she didn't want to have your children. Logic, right? Forget it.

"Hello." He surprised himself. He didn't say hello to women he didn't know in the lunch queue at the Copper Kettle. He only said hello to women he didn't know on walking paths, where you got a nod or a smile or a raised trekking pole in reply. But—actually, he did know her.

"You're from the bank."

"Right."

"Lynn."

"Very good."

A small moment of genius, remembering her plastic nametag through the bulletproof glass. And she was having the vegetarian lasagna as well. There was only one free table. And it was just sort of easy. He knew that she worked in the bank; she knew that he taught at the school. She'd moved to the town a couple of months previously and, no, she hadn't been up to the Tor yet. Would she be O.K. in trainers?

The next Saturday, she wore jeans and a sweater; she seemed half amused, half alarmed as he got his boots and pack out of the car and pulled on his scarlet mesh-lined Gore-Tex jacket.

"You'll need water."

"Will I?"

"Unless you don't mind sharing."

She nodded; they set off. As they climbed out of the town, the view broadened to include both her bank and his school. He let her set the pace. She walked easily. He wanted to ask how old she was, whether she went to the gym. He wanted to tell her that she looked taller now than when she was sitting behind the glass. Instead, he pointed out the ruins of an old slateworks and the rare breed of sheep—Jacob, were they?—that Henderson had started farming for people down south who wanted lamb that didn't taste like lamb, and were happy to pay for it.

Halfway up, it began to drizzle, and he grew anxious about her trainers on the wet shale near the top. He stopped, unzipped his pack, and gave her a spare waterproof. She took it as if it were quite normal that he'd brought it. He liked that. She didn't ask whose it was, who'd left it behind.

He passed her the water bottle; she drank and wiped the rim.

"What else have you got in there?"

"Sandwiches, tangerines. Unless you want to turn back."

"As long as you haven't got a pair of those awful plastic trousers."

"No."

He did, of course. And not just his own but a pair of Cath's that he'd brought for her. Something in him, something bold and timid at the same time, wanted to say, "Actually, I'm wearing North Cape CoolMax boxers with the single-button fly."

After they'd started sleeping together, he took her to the Great Outdoors. They got her boots—a pair of Brasher Supalites—and he thought, as she stood up in them, walked tentatively up and down, then did a little tap dance, how incredibly sexy small female feet looked in walking boots. They got her three pairs of ergonomic trekking socks designed to absorb pressure peaks, and her eyes widened at the idea of socks having a left and a right like shoes. Three pairs of inner socks, too. They got her a daypack, or a daysack, as the hunky assistant preferred to call it, by which point Geoff felt the fellow was beginning to get out of line. He'd shown Lynn how to position the hip belt, tighten the shoulder straps, and adjust the top tensioners; now he was patting the pack as if he were patting Lynn at the same time.

"And a water bottle," Geoff said firmly, to cut all that off.

They got her a waterproof jacket in dark green, which set off the flame of her hair; then he waited and let Hunk suggest waterproof trousers and get laughed at in reply. At the cash desk, he handed over his credit card.

"No, you can't."

"I'd like to. I'd really like to."

"But why?"

"I'd like to. Must be your birthday soon. Well, sometime in the next twelve months. Got to be."

"Thank you," Lynn said, but he could tell she was a bit edgy about it. "Will you wrap them up again for my birthday?"

"I'll do more than that. I'll clean your Brashers specially. Oh, yes," he said to the cashier. "And we'd better have some polish. Classic Brown, please."

Before they went walking next, he dubbined her boots to make the leather supple and strengthen the waterproofing. As he slipped his hand inside the fresh-smelling Brashers, he noted again, as he had in the shop, that she took half a size smaller than Cath. Half a size? It felt like a full size to him.

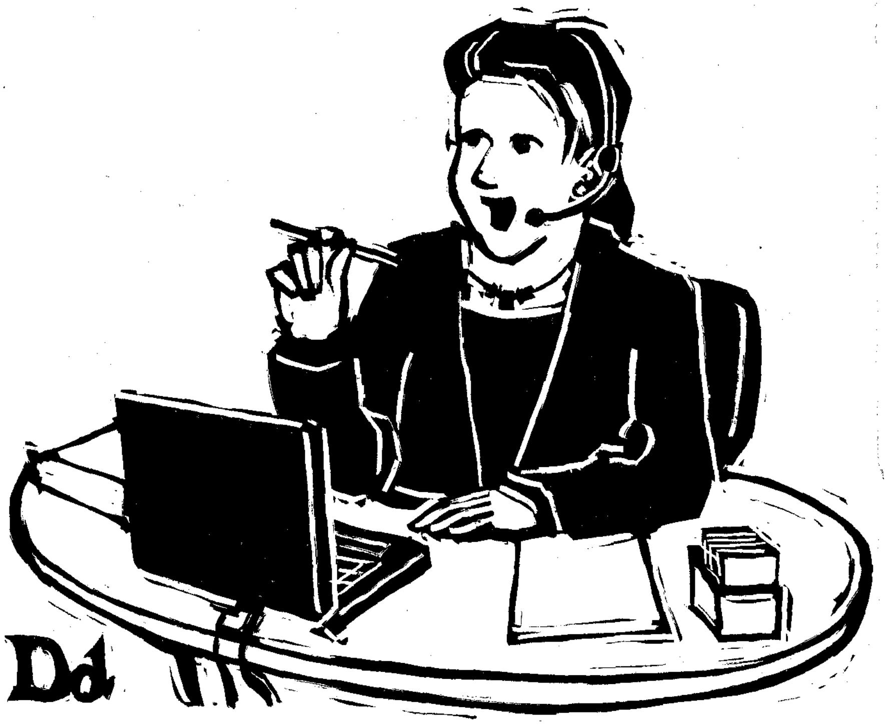
They did Hathersage and Padley Chapel; Calke Abbey and Staunton Harold; Dove Dale, as it narrows and deepens to Milldale; Lathkill Dale from Alport to Ricklow Quarry; Cromford Canal and the High Peak Trail. They climbed out of Hope to Lose Hill, then along what he promised her was the most scenic ridge walk in the entire Peak District until they came to Mam Tor, where the paragliders gathered: huge men who sweated up the hill with vast packs on their backs, then spread out their canopies like laundry on the grassy slope and waited for the updraft to lift them off their feet and into the sky.

"Isn't that thrilling," she said. "Wouldn't you like to do that?"

Geoff thought of men in hospital wards with broken backs, of paraplegics and quadriplegics. He thought of mid-air collisions with light aircraft. He thought of not being able to control the wind and getting carried higher and higher into the clouds, of coming down in unknown landscape, of getting lost and scared and peeing yourself. Of not having your boots on a path and a map in your hand.

"Sort of," he replied.

For him, freedom lay on the ground. He told her about the trespass on Kinder Scout in the nineteen-thirties: how walkers and hikers had come out from Manchester in their hundreds to the Duke of Devonshire's grouse moors to protest against lack of access to the countryside; how it had been a peaceful day, except when a drunken gamekeeper shot himself with his own gun; how the trespass



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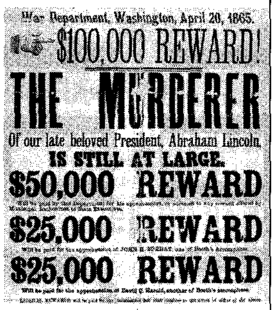

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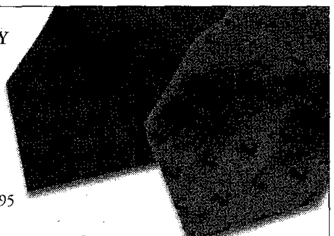

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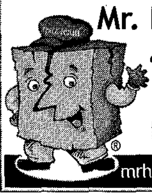

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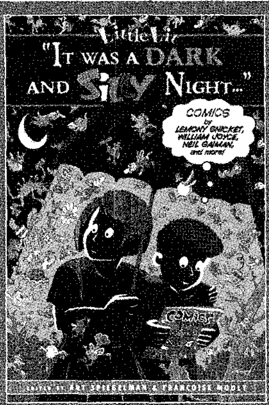
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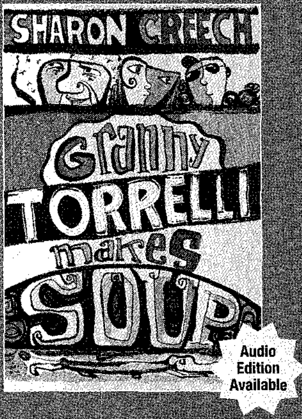
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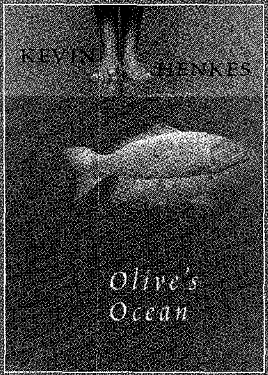
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had led to the creation of National Parks and registered rights of way; and how the man who'd led it had died recently but there were still a few survivors, one of them a hundred and three, living in a Methodist old people's home not far away. Geoff thought that his story soared better than any bloody paraglider.

"They just went trampling across his land like that?"

"Not trampling. Tramping, perhaps." Geoff was pleased with this emendation.

"But it *was* his land?"

"Technically, yes. Historically, perhaps not."

"Are you a socialist?"

"I'm in favor of the right to roam," he said cautiously. He didn't want to put a foot wrong now.

"It's all right. I wouldn't mind. Either way."

"What are you?"

"I don't vote."

Emboldened, he said, "I'm Labour."

"I thought you would be."

In his walking log, he noted the routes they took, the date, the weather, the duration, ending with an "L" in red, for Lynn. As opposed to a blue "C," for Cath. The times were about the same, regardless of the initial.

Should he get her a trekking pole? He didn't want to push it—she'd refused all offers of a walking hat, despite having the pros and cons explained to her. Not that there were any cons. Still, better a bare head than a baseball cap. He really couldn't take a walker in a baseball cap seriously, male or female.

He could get her a compass. Except he already had one himself, and rarely consulted it. If ever he broke his ankle, and had to tell her through the pain to set off across the moor using that tumbledown sheepfold as a reference point and to keep heading NNE—showing her how to turn the instrument and set a course—then she could borrow his for the purpose. One compass between two—that was right, somehow. Symbolic, you could say.

They did the Kinder Downfall circuit: Bowden Bridge car park, the reservoir, pick up the Pennine Way to the Downfall, fork right at Red Brook and down past Tunstead House and the Kinderstones. He told her about the average rainfall, and how, when it froze, the

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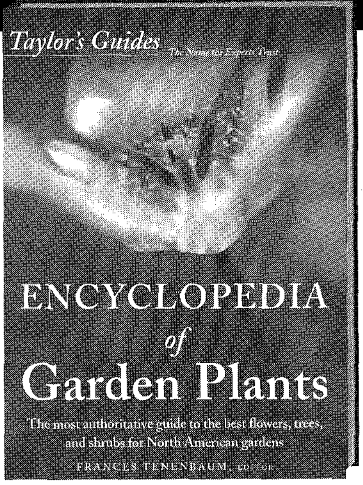
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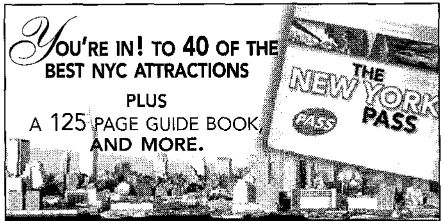
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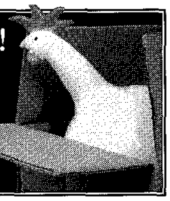

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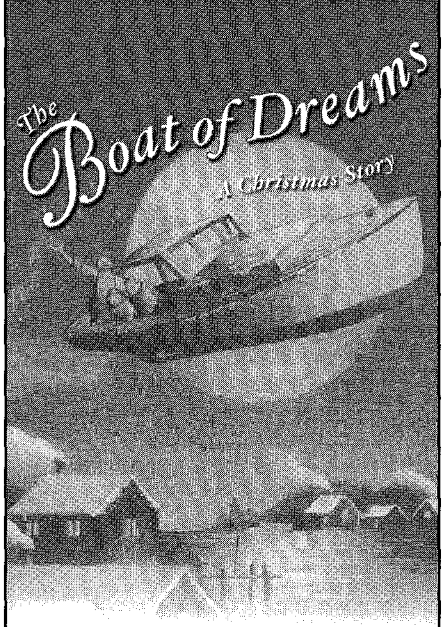

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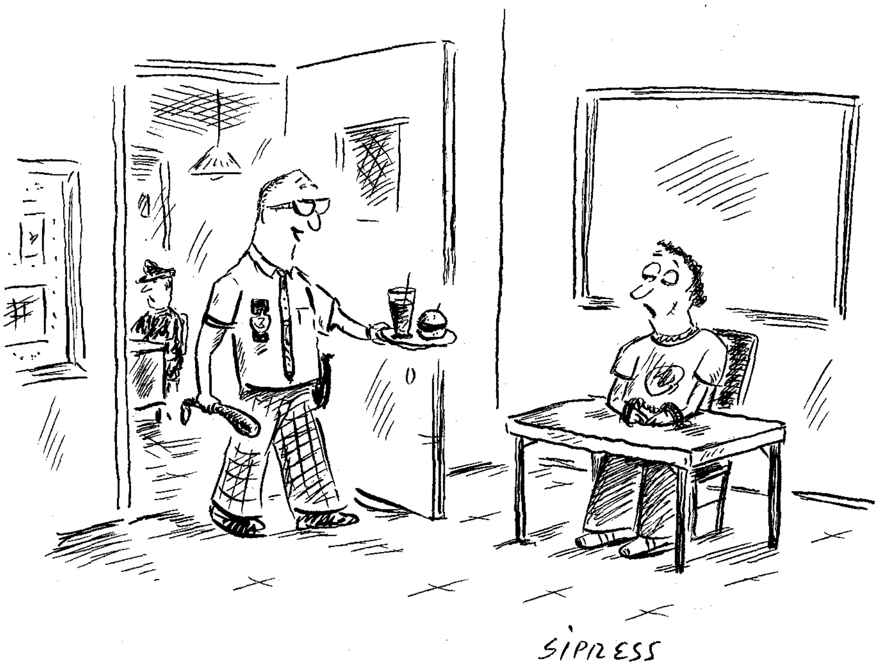

"Budget cuts—I'm good cop and bad cop."

* * *

Downfall turned into a cascade of icicles. A sight for the winter walker.

She didn't answer. Well, anyway, they'd have to get her a fleece if they were going up two thousand feet in winter. He still had the issue of *Country Walking* with the fleece test in it.

In the car park he looked at his watch.

"Are we late for something?"

"No, just checking. Four and a quarter."

"Is that good or bad?"

"It's good because I'm with you."

It was also good because four and a quarter was what it used to take him and Cath, and, say what you will, Cath was one pretty fit walker.

Lynn lit a Silk Cut, as she did at the end of every walk. She didn't smoke much, and he didn't really mind, even if he thought it was a stupid habit. Just when she'd done her cardiovascular system a power of good . . . Still, he knew from being a teacher that there were times when you had to confront and times when you took a less direct route.

"We could go up again after Christmas. In the New Year." Yes, he could get her the fleece as a present.

She looked at him and took a deep puff on her cigarette.

"If the weather gets cold enough, that is. For the icicles."

"Geoff," she said. "You're on my space."

"I just—"

"You're on my space."

"Yes, Miss Duke of Devonshire."

But she didn't think that was funny, and they drove home mainly in silence. Well, perhaps he'd walked her too hard. It was a bit of a stiff pull, a thousand feet or more.

He'd put the pizzas in the oven, laid the table, and was just pulling the tab on his first beer when she said, "Look, it's June. We met in—February?"

"Jan. 29." He corrected automatically, as he did when a pupil guessed 1079 for the Battle of Hastings.

"January the twenty-ninth," she repeated. "Look, I don't think I can do Christmas."

"Of course. You've got family."

"No, I don't mean my family. I mean, I can't do Christmas."

Ah, that familiar feeling again: one minute you were steaming along a track, the weight on your shoulders barely noticeable, and then suddenly you were in a pathless scrubland with no waymarks, the mist descending and the ground boggy beneath your feet.

When she didn't go on, he tried to help. "Don't much like Christmas myself. All that eating and drinking."

"Who knows where I'll be at Christmas?"

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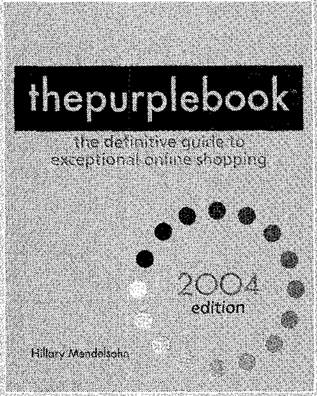

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"You mean, the bank might transfer you?" He hadn't thought of that.

"Geoff, listen. We met in January, as you pointed out. Things are . . . fine. I'm having a nice time, a nice enough time. . . ."

"Gotcha. Right." It was that stuff again, that stuff he didn't seem to be getting any better at. "No, course not. Didn't mean . . . Anyway, I'll turn the oven up. Crispy base." He took a swig of his beer.

"It's just—"

"Don't say it. I know. I get you." He was going to add "Miss Duke of Devonshire" again, but he didn't, and later, thinking it over, he guessed that it wouldn't have helped.

In September, he persuaded her to take a day off so that they could do the circuit from Calver. It was best to avoid the weekend, when every hiker and rock climber would be crawling over Curbar Edge.

They parked in the cul-de-sac next to the Bridge Inn, and set off, passing Calver Mill on the other side of the Derwent.

"Richard Arkwright is supposed to have built that," he said. "1785, I think."

"It's not a mill anymore."

"No, well, as you see. Offices. Maybe residential. Or a bit of both."

They followed the river, past the thrashing weir, through Froggatt and then Froggatt Woods to Grindleford. As they came out of the woods, the autumn sun, though weak, made him glad of his hat. Lynn still refused to buy one, and he supposed he wouldn't mention it again until the spring. She'd taken a tan during the summer months, and her freckles showed more than when he'd first met her.

There was a sharp climb out of Grindleford, which she took without a murmur; then he led the way across a field to the Grouse Inn. They sat at the bar for a sandwich. Afterward, the barman asked, "Coffee?" She said yes and he said no. He didn't believe in coffee on a walk. It was a stimulant, and the whole theory was that the walk should be stimulating enough without any assistance. Alcohol: stupid. He'd even come across hikers smoking joints.

He told her some of this, which may have been a mistake, because she said, "I'm only having a coffee, right?"—and

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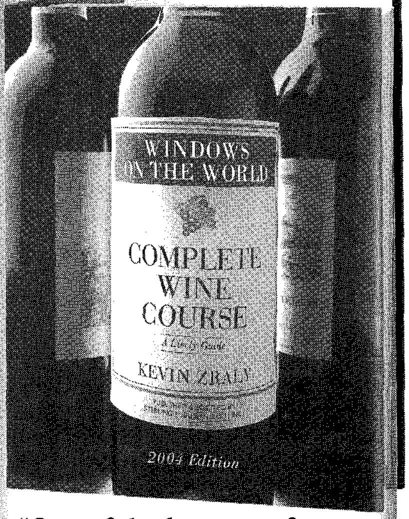

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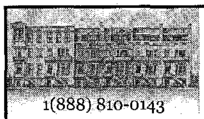

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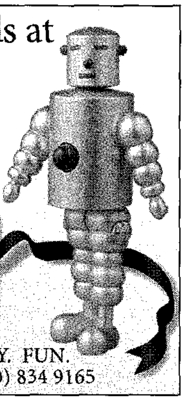

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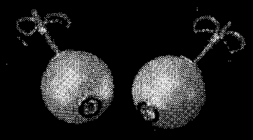

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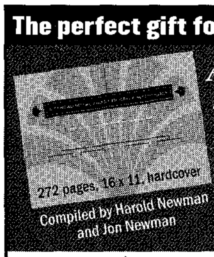

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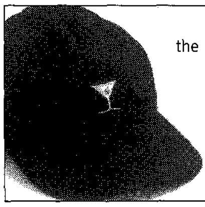

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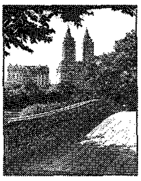

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then lit up a Silk Cut. Not waiting till the end of the walk. She looked at him.

"Yes?"

"I didn't say anything."

"You don't need to."

Geoff sighed. "I forgot to point out the signpost as we got to Grindleford. It's antique. Nearly a hundred years old. Not many left in the Peak District."

She blew smoke at him, rather deliberately, it seemed.

"And, all right, I also read somewhere that low-tar cigarettes are, in fact, just as bad for you, because they make you inhale more deeply to get the nicotine, so actually you're taking more of the toxins into your lungs."

"Then I may as well switch back to Marlboro Lights."

They retraced their steps, picked up the path, crossed a road, and took a left by the sign for the Eastern Moors Estate.

"Is this where the Bronze Age circle is?"

"I think so."

"What does that mean?"

Fair enough. But there's no point in not being yourself, is there? He was thirty-one, he had his opinions, he knew stuff.

"The circle is coming up on the left-hand side. But I don't think we should look at it this time."

"This time?"

"It's in the bracken."

"You mean you can't see it properly."

"No, I don't mean that. Well, yes, you do see it better at other times of the year. What I mean is that between August and October it's inadvisable to walk in bracken. Or downwind of it, for that matter."

"You're going to tell me why, aren't you?"

"Since you ask. If you walk in bracken for ten minutes, you're liable to ingest anything up to fifty thousand spores. They're too large to go into your lungs, so they go into your stomach. Tests have found them to be carcinogenic to animals."

"Lucky cows don't smoke as well."

"There are also ticks that transmit Lyme disease, which—"

"So?"

"So if you have to walk in bracken you tuck your trousers into your socks, roll your sleeves down, and wear a face mask."

"A face mask?"

"Respro makes one. It's called the Respro Bandit face scarf." Well, she'd asked, and she was getting the bloody answer.

When he'd finished, she said, "Thank you. Now lend me your handkerchief."

She tucked her trousers in, rolled her sleeves down, tied his hankie bandit style around her face, and tramped off into the bracken. He waited upwind. Another thing you could do was get some Bug Proof and put it on your trousers and socks. It killed the ticks on contact. Not that he'd tried it. Yet.

When she returned, they set off in silence along the gritstone edge, which was called either Froggatt Edge or Curbar Edge, or both, he didn't care either way at the moment. The turf was springy up here, and went right to the point where the ground dropped away, sheer for what looked like several hundred feet. It was always a surprise: without a sense of having climbed much, you suddenly found yourself startlingly high, miles above the sunlit valley with its tiny villages. You didn't need to be a bloody paraglider to get a view like this. There had been quarries around here, from which many of the country's millstones came. But he didn't tell her that.

Lynn went and stood a yard or two from the edge.

You could be looking down at the valley, no one visible for miles, and all of a sudden a helmeted face would pop up at your feet, and a climber would haul himself from nowhere up onto the turf. Life was full of surprises, wasn't it? Edge climbers, potholers, paragliders. People thought that if you were up in the air you were as free as a bloody bird. Well, you weren't. There were rules there, too, like everywhere.

Geoff didn't say anything. He didn't, for that matter, feel anything. Puzzled, of course, but that would pass. He set off again, unaware of whether she was following or not. Another half mile of this high upland, then a sharpish descent back to Calver. He had begun thinking about next week's work when he heard her scream.

He ran back, his pack thumping, the water in his bottle audibly sloshing.

"Christ, are you O.K.? Is it your foot? I should have told you about the rabbit holes."

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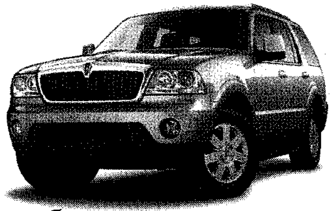

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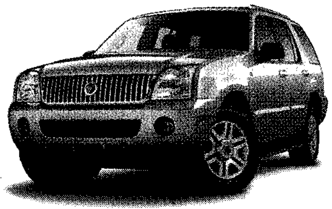

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But she just looked at him, expressionlessly. In shock, probably.

"Are you hurt?"

"No."

"Did you twist your ankle?"

"No."

He looked down at her Brasher Supalites: bracken caught in the eyelets, and the morning's shine gone from them. "Sorry—I don't understand."

"What?"

"Why you screamed."

"Because I felt like it."

Ah, missing waymarks again. "And . . . why did you feel like it?"

"Because I did."

No, he must have misheard, or misunderstood, or something. "Look, sorry, maybe I walked you too hard—"

"I'm fine, I said."

"Was it because—"

"I told you, I felt like it."

They walked down, in silence, to where they'd left the car. As he began unlacing his boots, she lit a cigarette. Well, he was sorry, but he was going to get to the bottom of it.

"Was it something to do with me?"

"No, it was something to do with me. I'm the one who screamed."

"Do you feel like doing it again? Now?"

"No."

"Well, if you did, what would it feel like?"

"What do you mean?"

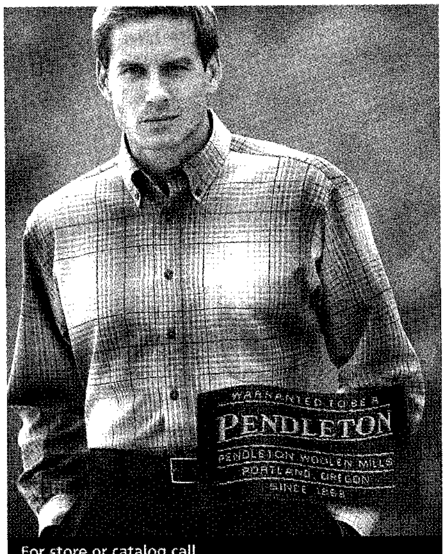
"I mean, if you felt like screaming again now, what would it feel like?"

"Geoff, it would feel like wanting to scream again now."

"And when do you think you'll do it again?"

She didn't answer that, and neither of them was surprised. She stamped out her Silk Cut beneath a Supalite and began to undo the laces, flicking bits of bracken onto the tarmac.

"4hrs inc lunch Grouse," he wrote in his walking log. "Weather fine." He added a red "L" in the final column, beneath a constant vertical of red "L"s. In bed, that night, he slept diagonally, and jolly good luck to him, he thought. The next morning, over breakfast, he leafed through a copy of *Country Walking* and filled out the application form to join the Ramblers. It said that he could pay either by check or by direct debit. He thought about this for a while, then chose direct debit. ♦



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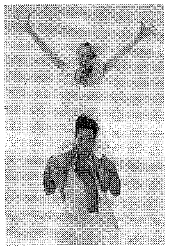

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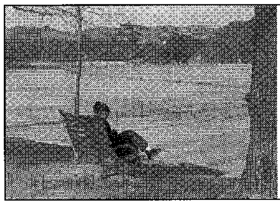

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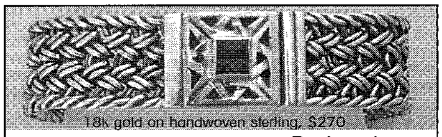

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THE CRITICS

THE THEATRE

BABY, REMEMBER MY NAME

How to become a star, nineteen-eighties style.

BY HILTON ALS

Like a number of pop artists who have attained lasting notoriety, the British singer and spectacle Boy George has a canny understanding of the needs, hopes, and dreams of his audience. In Culture Club, the rock group that made him a household name back in the early eighties, he married the sound of black nostalgia—Motown, ska, and a little reggae—to a distinctly white representation of visual difference. His look—a kind of errant Hasidism mixed with a feminized Rastafarianism—was an advertisement not only for his strikingly amphibious self but also for world music, which was just coming into vogue. In fact, what he was putting over was the entire history of English eccentricity, with its arch knowingness, its veiled sexual references, and its "naughty" borrowings from the former colonies.

Culture Club disbanded in 1986. Boy George went on to drug addiction, rehab, spiritualism, memoir-writing, record-producing, and d.j.'ing before conceiving and writing the songs for the musical "Taboo" (at the Plymouth). In it, one can hear how his songwriting talent has deepened, and one can see that his feel for the business of show hasn't faltered. It's astonishing, really, that the young man who made the world bop to "Karma Chameleon," in 1983, could have written the haunting aria "Talk Amongst Yourselves" or the structurally complex quintet "Out of Fashion," but there they are—songs that break your heart with their bravado and quivering self-awareness. Boy George has defied pop-music pigeonholing by directly addressing the sad fact that even ebullient eccentrics get older in a society where age is synonymous with conformity.

What do you do with your iconoclasm as you move closer to the grave than the dance floor? This is "Taboo" 's underlying theme. Unfortunately, it is not one that the writer, Charles Busch, has chosen to emphasize. The author of "Vampire Lesbians of Sodom," "Psycho Beach Party," and the recent film "Die, Mommie, Die!" the campy Busch was perhaps too obvious a choice for a show about the London club scene in the eighties and early nineties—that world was synthetic enough without coating it in the verbal equivalent of Day-Glo stretch pants. (The show ran in London last year with a book by Mark Davies; Busch was hired by Rosie O'Donnell, a co-producer of the Broadway staging, presumably in a bid
tighten and Americanize the productio

In an opening that borrows heav
from the first moments of Stephen Son
heim's "Follies," two former denizens
the night, Big Sue (the great Liz M
Cartney) and Philip Sallon (Raúl E
parza), have been reunited for a pho
shoot. Soon, they begin to reminis
about the club they frequented in th
glory days, Taboo, which was run by th
late friend and nemesis the Australia
born performance artist Leigh Bowe
played by Boy George. (Bowery died
AIDS in 1995.) Inevitably, Big Sue a
Philip, who worked the door at anot
club, Planets—when refusing someo
entrance, he'd hold a mirror up to t
unfortunate's face and say, "Would
let you in?"—contradict each othe
memories with screeching subjectivi

Going backward in time, we see B
George (played here by Euan M
ton) working his way toward fame.
route, he falls in love with Marcus (C
Shields), a photographer of indeter
nate sexuality. This is the era of the N
Romantic: Adam Ant and furbelo
But Marcus, with the slicked-back h
black leather jacket, and jeans that h
been a turn-on since Brando courted
bellion in "The Wild One," has the lo
of a modern Teddy: cool and dista
And at first he's standoffish; he's datin
girl. But what Boy George can't have
gets—and then throws away. (Mar
becomes his lover for a while.) It's a p
tern that repeats itself. Morton allo
us to see Boy George's cracked heart—
well as the cleverness, talent, and def
siveness he uses as adhesive to hold it
gether. When he performs "Pretty Li
a song about the "lies" inherent in cro
dressing, he has all the touching pat
of another drag star, the Warhol c
ation Candy Darling: he wants the wo
to love him for himself—if only he
figure out who that is.

Bowery, on the other hand, had li
patience for hidden selves. His perfor
ances were all on the surface, and he m
no distinction between the social
the plastic arts. In London, he exhibi
himself—wearing extravagant outfit
his own design—behind a gallery's gl

PHOTOGRAPH BY RICHARD AVEDON

Euan Morton as Boy George, and Boy George as Leigh Bowery, in New York, November 10, 2003.

62

wall; in New York, he stapled a friend to his body, enclosed her in his costume, and then "gave birth" to her through an opening in his tights. In "Taboo," unfortunately, his character feels insufficiently embodied; he's not the heart of the show, as he should be, but, rather, a foil for the character of Boy George. One sings; the other doesn't. One survived; the other didn't. One is the composer of a Broadway show; the other isn't. It is fitting that Bowery should be played by a star, but Boy George is the wrong star. He has a singer's sense of the stage, not an actor's; he's tentative in his movements, and he appears to take little pleasure in incarnating someone other than himself.

Boy George's Bowery barely relates to Nicola Bateman (Sarah Uriarte Berry), a young artist whose fierce devotion and startling turns of mind transformed Bowery and his work, and whom he eventually married. As it happens, I met Nicola when I was researching an article about Bowery in 1998. The interview was arranged by the filmmaker Charles Atlas, whose documentary "The Legend of Leigh Bowery" (which opens this month at Cinema Village) is a far more accurate and moving portrait than "Taboo." Nicola struck me as a model of good sense and cheer: one could easily see why Bowery had absorbed her into his life. She was a true companion—the person who licked the glitter off his eyelids and revealed him to himself.

In 1977, when I was sixteen, I graduated from New York's High School of Performing Arts. Back then, most of the students referred to the school as "P.A." It was housed in a beautiful, nearly decrepit building on West Forty-sixth Street, near Theatre Row and across the street from the Luxor Baths, a wonderful, democratic neighborhood that reflected the democratic spirit of the school itself, which took on students of acting, music, and dance who were economically and racially diverse.

Alan Parker's 1980 film fantasy about the school, "Fame," captured some of P.A.'s atmosphere of healthy and not so healthy competitiveness; and the star of the movie, Irene Cara, as the ambitious, albeit guileless, Coco Hernandez, provided a bit of seedy titillation by taking off her dress and singing the Oscar-winning theme. Many teen-agers who saw the film dreamed of enrolling at t "Fame" school, as they called it. Wh they didn't know—unless they were a cepted—was that the students the spent less time stopping traffic by dan ing on taxicabs than they did simp working hard; P.A. was as rigorous any private conservatory. In 1984, t school moved to Lincoln Center, whe it thrives still.

The new musical "Fame on 42 Street" (at the Little Shubert, under t direction of Drew Scott Harris) tells t (fictional) story of the last class to grad ate from the old building. There's Sere Katz (Sara Schmidt), a shy Jewish g with a big voice. There's Carmen D (Nicole Leach), the "fiery" Latina who stand-in for Cara's Coco. And there's T rone Jackson (Shakiem Evans), an ang black dude who looks good flaring nostrils as he bucks authority and his E glish teacher's required-reading list. Th are only three out of fourteen speaki parts developed, if that is the word, David De Silva, who has been worki on some version of "Fame" for mo than twenty years. (Not only did he pr duce Parker's film; he was a consulti producer on the ensuing television seri which ran from 1982 to 1987.) Onsta however, De Silva has created a sh that is alternately sentimental, explo ative, and ugly. The lyrics (by Jacq Levy) and the music (by Steve M goshes) are passable, but José Ferna dez's book is as lacking in nutrients a chocolate box full of dust. The sh has the look and feel of one of th theme-based touring productions t are meant to showcase, say, Americ swing music, or tap dancing, for Eu peans and Asians who don't know better. (Indeed, "Fame on 42nd Stre has already toured in Europe.)

The only performer who survives t mess with her dignity intact is Schm With a fine, clear voice, she tries valian to inject credibility and depth of feel into what passes for dialogue. If she sustain this quality through the sho run, she should win the Ethel Merm Stamina Award. On the afternoon I the musical, the audience was made for the most part, of adolescent gi They applauded with great enthusia when Carmen sang "Fame," *after* untimely death. Don't ask. I'm sure show will live forever. ♦

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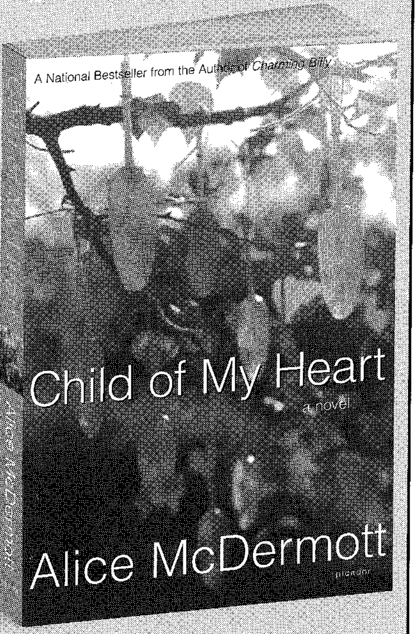

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A CRITIC AT LARGE

TRUE COLORS

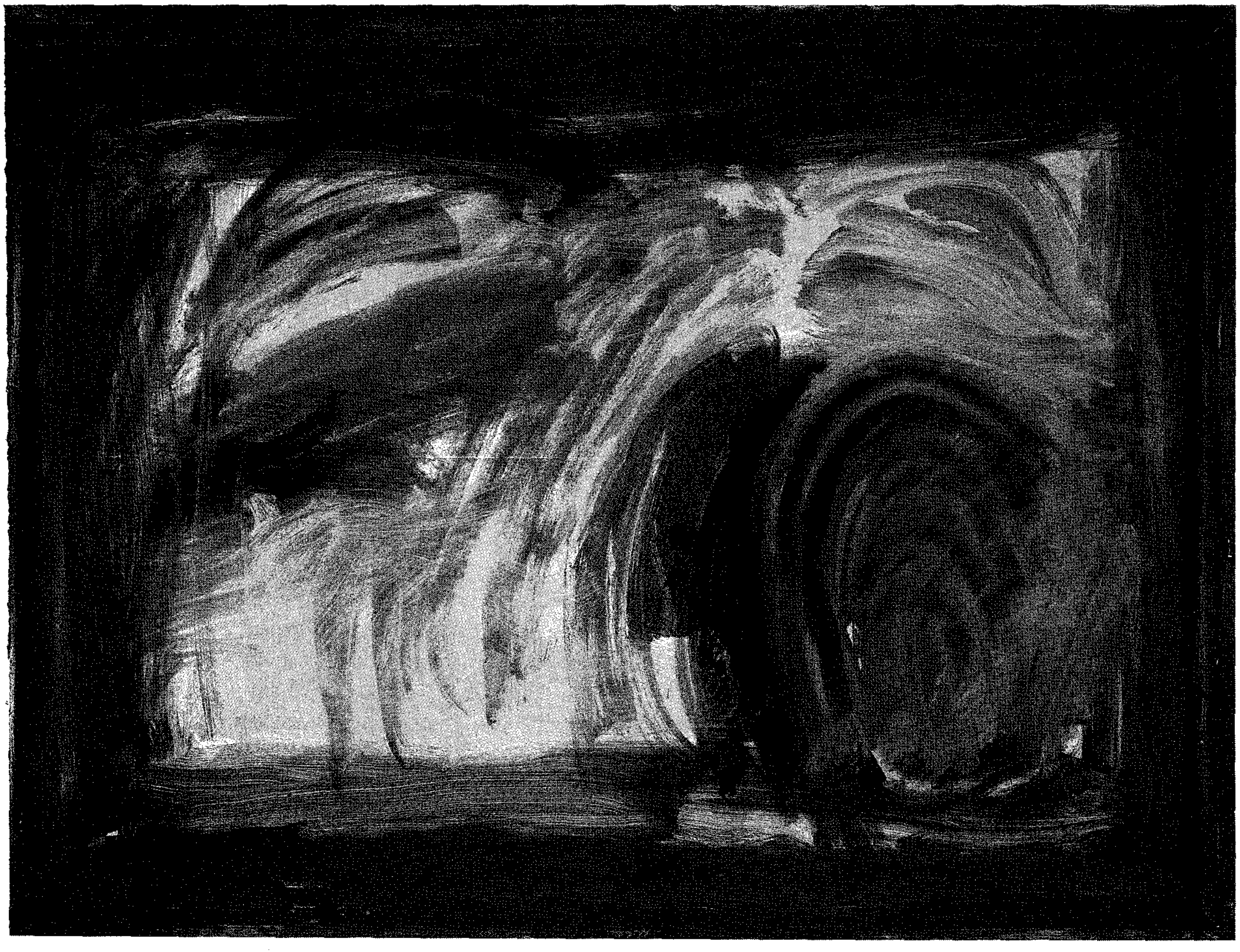
Howard Hodgkin returns to New York.

BY ANTHONY LANE

The first time Howard Hodgkin came to the United States, he was ven years old. The year was 1940, and odgkin, whose father was serving in e Royal Air Force, had been evacued from his native England, along with mother and sister. They lived in New rk, whose many advantages he now mmarizes in a single phrase: "I could to look at pictures."

An early injection of America is recmmended for any British subject bent creativity. Nobody reading Martin nis, for instance, on the year that he nt in Princeton in 1959 (his father d come to teach there) can doubt the fluorescent shock that it administered to his system. In Hodgkin's case, nothing in his stay was more dramatic than its end. In 1943, the boat on which the Hodgkins returned to Europe took a traumatizing twenty-three days to reach Portugal, only to be torpedoed on its subsequent voyage, and the plane that bore the family on to England was, on its next flight, reported missing, feared lost; the actor Leslie Howard was among the passengers. For those who claim to see much in Hodgkin's art that is forever in danger of going missing, feared lost—places, persons, the clutch and grab of disquiet and desire—these remembrances are rich in hints.

His life since then has been a stew of the restless and the sedate. He was educated, but not much, constantly leaving one school for the next. In his brief time at Eton, he was taught by Wilfrid Blunt, the brother of Anthony—art historian, traitor, and spy. Hodgkin himself taught, at art schools, although he is wary of the consequences. When I asked him recently if he enjoyed teaching, he answered quickly, "Yes, too much. That means burnout." At seventy-one, he is among the senior citizens of British painting, but, like Lucian Freud and Frank Auerbach, he is burning bright, and working with a stamina that would cause most art students to trip over their video installations and faint. He does not produce drawings or sculptures. He spurns the charms of painting in the open air. One could state that he never works from life, but he might plausibly reply that he never works from anything else. The fact that he chooses not to stand in front of a naked body and pick up a brush does not preclude the existence of a Hodgkin



emorial" (2000-03). Hodgkin's work has undergone not so much a later flowering as a controlled explosion.

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nude. There are endless bodies, and bits of body, in his paintings, and they arrive there radiantly refracted through the prism of his memory. If you know Hodgkin's work, you can spot it across a crowded room. If not, look out for the distinguishing marks of the species: pigment as dense and lickable as honey, and clashes of tone much too riotous for good taste, yet unimprovably balanced. Brushstrokes, far from being concealed, are left as trackable as paw prints. The results read less like romantic concoctions than like quivering reports on actual experience; how else can one account for their leap and bite? You could hang a Hodgkin in the Frick, but it would be like hosting a tea party and inviting a tiger.

The artist's attraction to America, meanwhile, is undimmed. There have been Hodgkin shows at the Phillips Collection, the Berkeley Art Museum, and, most spaciously, at the Metropolitan Museum in the winter of 1995-96; and a painting such as "Rhode Island," completed in 2002, with its hellfire reds, its stanchion of hard black, and its leafy strewings at the base, could well be the most opulent tribute ever paid to that state. Comparing responses to his work on both sides of the Atlantic, Hodgkin says that at the Met "people were much more willing to embrace the feeling that the paintings contained. I remember one man saying, 'You're driving my wife insane.' " This is reported with considerable relish.

Insanity levels in Chelsea should now be peaking, with the latest Hodgkin show having opened at the Gagosian Gallery on West Twenty-fourth Street, where it will run through December 20th. "Go early in the run," Hodgkin advises. "Pictures get looked at and they change." He sometimes talks as if paint were greasepaint—as if his works were a cast of characters, devised, directed, and gorgeously costumed by him, then left onstage to find their own way, growing older and less innocent with each viewing.

All the pictures at Gagosian were completed in the past two years, although to apply exact dates to them is a fraught affair. Hodgkin labels each work with the time that it took to make; "Italy," for example, with its long, legato streaks of earthy pinks, warm with everything from terra-cotta tiling to recently stroked skin, bears the tag "1998-2002." That is a simple time frame, yet, as Hodgkin admits, "it annoys people intensely." We are perfec content to learn that a novelist need half a decade to tell his or her tale, b somehow we demand of painters a lit more dash. "Finishing something is rea bowing to the inevitable," Hodgkin sa "It can take me months to talk mys into accepting it." He sounds like a dipl mat from a troubled land, wearily agre ing to a peace deal.

Hodgkin lives in London, where was born, and where I met him late October. Down one of the sho bookstore-haunted streets opposite t British Museum, I found a low gre door, passed through a narrow corrid and, half expecting a secret gard emerged into a surprising courtyard, the center of which lies the studio wh he has worked for the past twenty yea Hodgkin rose with some difficulty fr his chair: "My legs really are such an e dangered species," he announced, though the rest of him seems to be flo ishing. He is a compact figure, wit genial softness in his features and at t edges of his voice, but you sense at o a steely dedication to his trade. All in I think he would have made an excell Roman, of the Horatian variety, and r body who wears as much unstructu linen as Hodgkin would have a probl with togas.

Hung around him, on walls as b and stately as a nave, were seven of large paintings that were destined the Gagosian show. All of them, a his custom, are painted on wood—so of it deliberately unprimed—or on boa so that the cheap chippiness sho through the gaps in the paint. The fra alone announce them as Hodgkins; often scouts junk shops for old fram ranging from the blockish to the orn and his assistant, Andy Barker, then them with wooden inserts where would expect a canvas to be. There blank canvases in the studio, but t are used simply to hide the painti from view, leaving only one exposed— likes to labor on a single work, shutt out the distraction of its fellows. He lows the paint to loop, stripe, and blo all the way to the outer rim, like a sto teller determined to overrun his ti

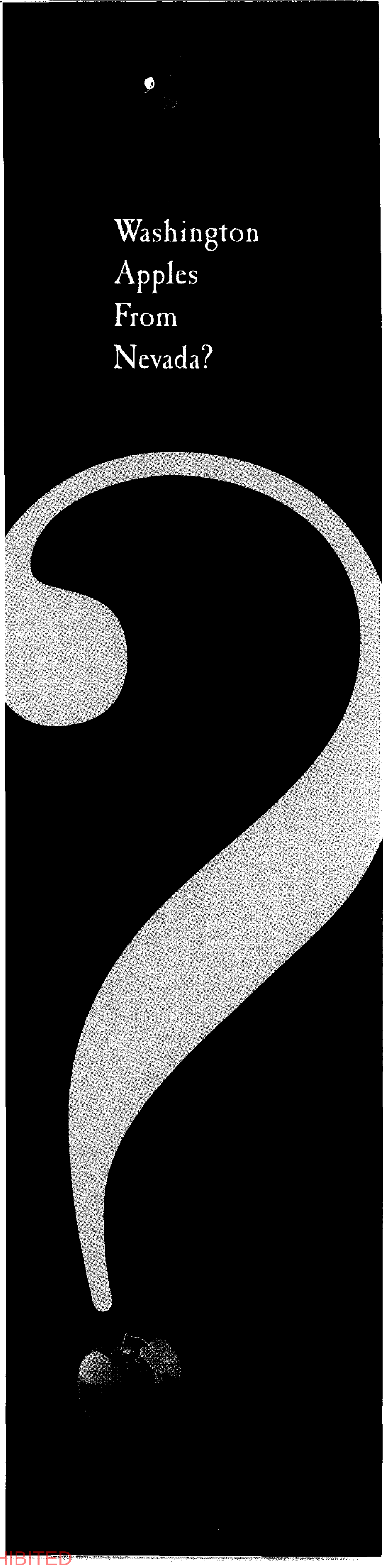
On a table in the middle of the ro when I arrived, sat a cardboard mode the layout for the Gagosian show. He

gned the space himself ("The last thing
vanted was an architect"), and the walls
ere painted, according to his specifica-
on, "a slightly dirty white." There is no
ing artist whose pictures need less help
om their surroundings, for Hodgkin is a
lorist so remorseless in his sense of ad-
nture that the English, connoisseurs of
e dingy and the dun, have never quite
cided what to make of him. "They
n't even like art very much," he de-
ures, with the ruefulness of a natural-
rn Eeyore. From the late nineteen-
ties, Hodgkin has made it his business
demonstrate what happens when col-
s meet, fight, form unlikely couplings,
d part. "E. M. Forster says you've got to
unce the reader," he told me, and he
els equally obliged to startle those who
nd before his art: "You've got to grab
em before they look."

In 1992, he was knighted for his ser-
ces to art. There is no more decorous
othering than the embrace of the Brit-
establishment, and, in fending off that
reat, Hodgkin's work underwent not so
uch a late flowering as a controlled ex-
osion. Few of the sensations that were
ongered by the young British artists of
e period—Tracey Emin, Sarah Lucas,
the Chapman brothers, all of whom
nain inordinately skilled at reaching a
nd under the public's skirt—can begin
rival the ravishment that is practiced
on us by a picture such as "Lovers"
984-92), with its huge tilted rainbow of
erald and red, plus a bulbous comma
orange that, as if recounting the chro-
logy of sex, could be anything from
allus to fetus. ("Can you consciously
ive for ambiguity?" I asked him. "Oh,
. You can do *anything*," he replied.
he eye is always trickable.") Even
mien Hirst's infamous shark, hanging
ormaldehyde and entitled "The Phys-
l Impossibility of Death in the Mind
Someone Living" (1991), seems flaky
d lumbering next to Hodgkin's "Grief"
99-2002)—wave upon wave of blue
blue, deepening at the core to a bruised
d feathery violet, as if the painter were
isting that the passing of a loved one is
t something that we get over, like a
dle or a disease, but something that
worsen, like a storm.

Does that make "Grief" an abstract
nting? Hodgkin himself has described
works as "representational pictures of
otional situations," but that is more of a starting point than a last word. What is undeniable is that the pictures feel loaded with the specific; anybody who associates abstraction with vagueness will be forced to reconsider, and you cannot study a picture like "Undertones of War"—perhaps his most unbeautiful image to date, painted on knotty old wood, and scored with wrathful daubs of black—and still believe that Hodgkin is a hermeticist, sealing his exquisite creations against the outside world. (He began that work in 2001, before September 11th.) Hodgkin is pleased when the precision of his references gets through; one young relative of his gazed at "Double Portrait," with its plums and browns trapped in a violent orange, and said, "Oh, yes, two gay people who collect porcelain, is it?" Correct.

Anybody hunting a new Hodgkin—and "Double Portrait" will set you back a cheerful three hundred thousand—will need to clear some wall space. These are large and looming works, as commanding as altarpieces—"Autumn" is the biggest picture he has ever made, some seven feet by ten, and if you can't own it you can always reproduce the effect by planting a deciduous forest in the corner of your living room. Alternatively, you can try to unpick the puzzle of each painting, asking yourself, "Just *how* did he do it?" Take "In Raimund Stecker's Garden" (1998-2001): was that cloud of busy, scruffy-tailed blue in the upper half the final patch of paint to be applied? It certainly seems that way, but how about that rainy diagonal of gray at the bottom right? Or that juiced-up yellow at the picture's heart? Hodgkin himself is happy to keep a secret: "One of the few skills, as such, that I can be said to have acquired is to make the beginning and the end lie down side by side," he says with particular care. So how does he know when his work is done? "When the original feeling comes back as a painting." I indicate a passage in the top right-hand corner of "Memorial" (2000-03), with its new variation on an old Hodgkin theme: the fluid, falling arc of paint that speaks, against all logic, of the breaking of hearts. Can the swipe of a brush really do that—signal, over and over, another small paradise lost? "I'm very pleased with that part of the painting, so I can't really talk about it," Hodgkin says, and we leave it at that. ♦



BOOKS

PAPERY PASSIONS

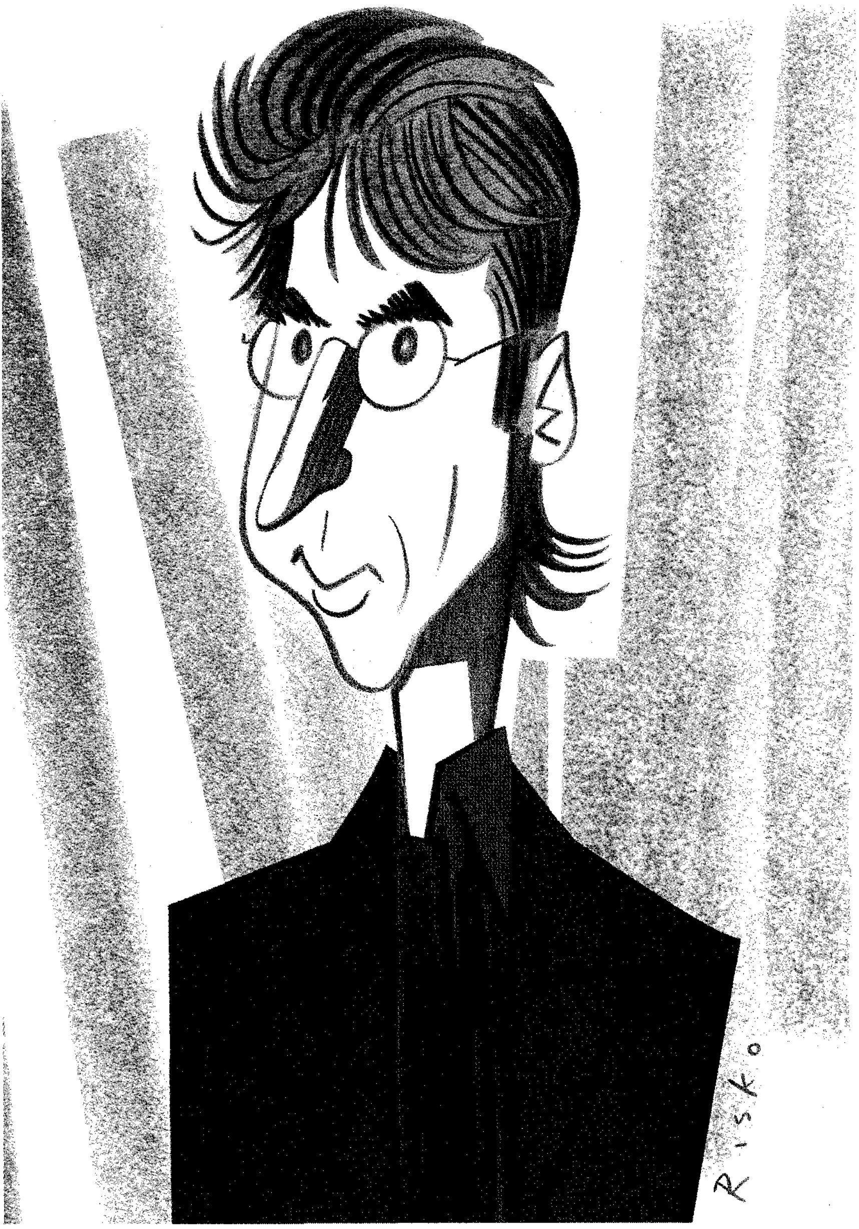
A new novel by Peter Carey.

BY JOHN UPDIKE

Peter Carey's new novel, "My Life as a Fake" (Knopf; $24), is so confidently brilliant, so economical yet lively in its writing, so tightly fitted and continuously startling in its plot that something, we feel, must be wrong with it. It ends in a bit of a rush, and left several questions dangling in this reader's mind. Unfortunately, to spell out those questions would be to betray too much of an intricate fictional construct where little is as it first seems and fantastic developments unfold like scenes on a fragile paper fan. To be brief: the narrator and heroine is Sarah Elizabeth Jane Wode-Douglass, the spinster editor of the London avant-garde journal *The Modern Review*, who in August of 1985 sits down in Berkshire to recount an adventure that befell her thirteen years before, in Malaysia, when an old friend of her family's, the poet and novelist John Slater, twenty years her senior, persuaded her to accompany him to Kuala Lumpur for a week. Thus, she writes, she "entered that maze from which, thirteen years later, I have yet to escape."

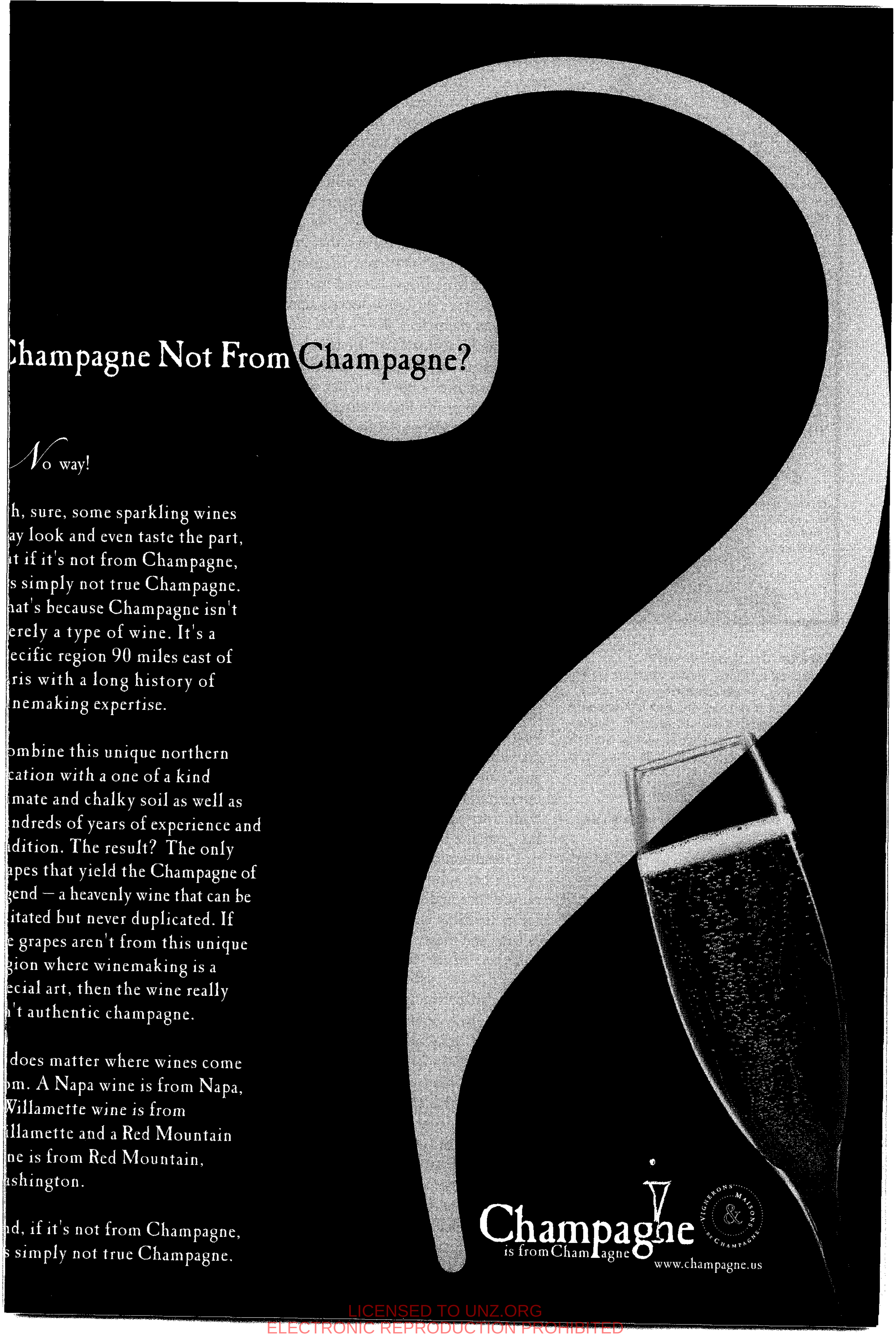
At the center of the maze lies an old Australian literary scandal, the so-called McCorkle Hoax, in which, in 1946, an obscure and, because obscure, bitter poet named Christopher Chubb passed off parodic verses of his own as the work of an authentic poet-of-the-people, the imaginary Bob McCorkle. McCorkle is supposedly dead, and his mighty works have been timidly brought forward by his unsophisticated sister. The rough-hewn opus was accepted and published with fanfare by the avant-garde journal *Personae*, whose editor was a rich Jew who had befriended Chubb, one David Weiss. When Weiss, on the strength of one punning line, was prosecuted for obscenity, Chubb exposed the hoax, humiliating him further; in mid-trial, Weiss died violently, apparently a suicide. Readers up on Australian artistic pranks—born, Slater theorizes, of antipodean cultural insecurity—will recognize the lineaments of the real-life Ern Malley affair, which was perpetrated in 1944, by two skillful anti-modernists, Harold Stewart and James McAuley, victimizing a Melbourne magazine called, believe it or not, *Angry Penguins*. The editor-victim was Max Harris, who did not die of the hoax but lived to write, in a recollection years later, "I still believe in Er
Malley. . . . I can still close my eyes ar
conjure up such a person in our streets
Carey quotes this article of strange fai
in an afterword, and it, taken with th
epigraph from Mary Shelley's "Franken
stein," perhaps gives a sufficient hint
the novel's animating premise: Bob M
Corkle lives.

A native Australian who has bee
resident for thirteen years in New Yo
City, Carey has used the distance to co
template and reshape some notable le
ends of his homeland: his previous nov
the epic, Booker Prize-winning "Tr
History of the Kelly Gang" (2000), r
tells the tale of Australia's most famo
outlaw, Ned Kelly, in the hero's touc
ingly and comically ingenuous voice. T



In his novels, Carey has reshaped notable legends of his native Australia.

ROBERT RISKO



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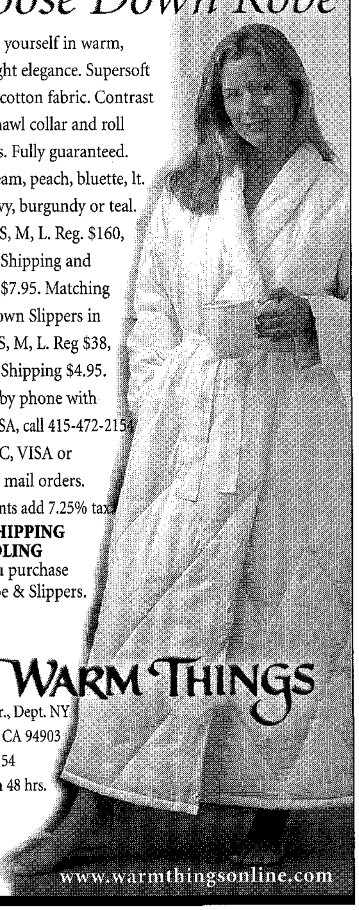

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novel before that, "Jack Maggs" (1997), takes an Australian element from Dickens's "Great Expectations," the transported convict Magwitch, and enlarges him into an epitome of adopted Australian nationhood. The Australian connection is understandably Carey's lifeblood, but his inspirations depend, in these three instances, on other texts. He imposes personality upon paper rather than deriving, as novelists more customarily do, a paper work from personal sources. Novels of his that draw directly upon Australian reality, like "Bliss" (1981) and "Oscar and Lucinda" (1988), have a hectic fullness and a fond cruelty reminiscent of Dawn Powell's novels of her native Ohio. Such brimming, jostling fullness thins a bit as Carey ventures, however nimbly, into the small continent's historic past. "My Life as a Fake" does more than take its start from a historical literary hoax; its central theme and its dominant metaphor are paper, amid the papery passions of the writers and editors who are its principal characters.

"The tropics are not kind to paper," Christopher Chubb observes, as the ulcerations of Malaysia eat away at his legs. His lowly position of bike repairer on a "noisy street of Chinese shophouses with the unlikely name of Jalan Campbell" has been achieved at the end of a long chain of heated events having to do with printed words. In a dirty sarong and with close-cropped hair, he makes our narrator think, in her first glance, "of both a prisoner and a monk." But, like him, Sarah is obsessed by literary greatness; neither money nor love much matters to her. John Slater has stooped to pursue both, and she rather despises him for it; he strikes her in his worldliness as "a large and meaty man." When Chubb calls her on the telephone, he has "a strange, papery voice," and she will end, despite Slater's emphatic advice to the contrary, by listening to that siren voice on and on, transcribing Chubb's tangled tale as he tells it. Chubb is easier to listen to than to conjure as a physical presence: the corners of his lips are shadowy, and his eyelids and his hands are both "papery." Even his one suit, old and dirty, comes back from the cleaners paperized: "The process of cleaning had so shocked the fabric that it was now broken on the creases, papery and crumbling in his hand like the wing of a dead butterfly."

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Edna O'Brie
Maira Kalma
and mor

AND: A calendar of *New York* events across the country

And yet books, at least the sacred vol-
ne of McCorkle's poetry, have an un-
pectedly various, organic quality: "It
s much heavier than I had expected,
d very strange to touch—a peculiar
ture, slightly oily in places, scaly in
ers." When this book is at last opened
d read by our heroine, its contents are
ceral: "Whoever he was or had been,
b McCorkle was indeed a genius. He
d ripped up history and nailed it back
gether with its viscera on the outside,
that glistening green truth showing
the rip marks." The work puts her in
nd of Ezra Pound, the ineffable, un-
homable Pound of the Cantos. She
umphantly claims, "This was worth
ng born for, this single giddy glimpse,
this high place, with the sound of
own blood singing in my ears." A
ok is not just paper but humanity,
h and blood, as Chubb finds when
comes to nurse the dying master poet:
be so intimate with Bob McCorkle
s disgusting, as unnatural and fright-
ng as holding one's own vital organs
one's hands."

Along with Pound, Milton, and the
ive Ern Malley, Joseph Conrad haunts
y Life as a Fake." Teeming, torrid
laysia is "*Lord Jim* or even worse," and
ubb, who talks "all day and almost half
night," resembles Conrad's dreamily
g-winded narrator Marlow. Narra-
s within narratives uncoil as Malay-
ousts English-language literature at
emotional center of the book. Chubb
kes a new friend, the dark, wall-eyed
nil Kanagaratnam Chomley, called
laha, who teaches school and makes
obby of poisoning. Mulaha's tale of
ighter and vengeance under the Jap-
se occupation takes us far afield from
theme of literary fakery and from the
suit of the white whale McCorkle,
has kidnapped what seems to be
ubb's infant daughter, sprung from a
ourceful, shape-shifting beauty called,
en Chubb first meets her, Noussette
rkson. (Down, plot!) And, indeed,
v that the European colonization of
itheast Asia is a bittersweet memory,
served in the words of Conrad and
well and Graham Greene, who will
liate this vast region for the Western
gination but the Australians? They
e it as their nearest escape from insu-
y, a vacationland and possible sphere
nfluence.

Carey's prose is up to any task he sets it. His novel has many voices: Sarah's taut blithe fluency, that of an upper-class intellectual; Slater's bluff, irresistibly British effrontery; Chubb's defensive meander punctuated with Australian and Malay expressions; Mulaha's elaborate courtesies; a Chinese-Malaysian woman's aggressively fractured English—all without benefit of quotation marks. Usually I simply resent deprivation of these helpful, clarifying indicators, but Carey (who didn't use them in "True History of the Kelly Gang," either) almost persuades me that human speech, thus unified with the narrative sentences, acquires a certain stateliness, as in the Bible. McCorkle, like the also heroic Ned Kelly, speaks in the near-Biblical accents of a common man whose dignity has been offended:

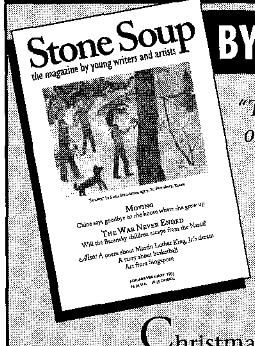
> I continued strolling until I found a café run by a little reffo fellow in a dirty singlet. I got him to make me a chicken-and-lettuce sandwich and a chocolate malted milk. At dusk I returned to Birdsing's residence. . . . From the middle of his iris beds I could clearly see the accused through his window. He had a bottle of Victoria Bitter and a meat pie for his dinner. I also live alone and know what it is to spend these hours of solitude when I would rather have a wife and baby and the smell of stew bubbling in the pot. But what civilised person can sit down to a meal like this and not pick up a book to read?

Even Sarah, confessing to lesbianism, warms into an innocent lilt: "I shocked her often but delighted her all the more, and there was no part of her that was secret to me." Chubb, though demoralized by his experience of the word made flesh, brings the odd detail sharply to life:

> [Mulaha] was very fierce, very definite, like someone accustomed to giving orders, also like a small bird with fixed ideas. He took out a pen and rapped McCorkle's nose with it.

Carey's own voice sounds in an arrestingly apt simile: "McCorkle quickly made a bamboo frame on which to lash the naked, mud-caked woman. She was a tiny thing but dense as a bulldog."

Other reviewers of this folded and refolded tale of mental and physical adventure have claimed its moral to be that everyone depicted is a fake. I don't see this; the characters are as genuine as their words permit them to be, though all, being characters, are caught up in the business of fiction, which is fakery. ♦



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BOOKS

LOVE FOR SALE

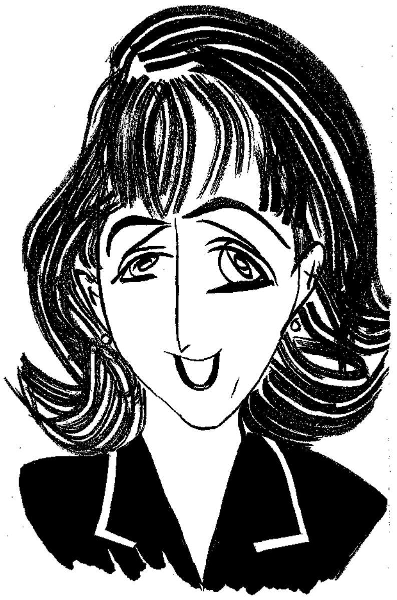
An M.B.A. brings marketing methods to the mating game.

BY REBECCA MEAD

The notion that dating, mating, and marriage take place within a marketplace is a conceit universally observed by writers of comedic-dramatic television shows, directors of romantic comedies in Hollywood, and authors of "chick lit" novels loosely based on plots from Jane Austen or Edith Wharton. Objective measures of eligibility—appearance, earning power, age—are understood to determine whether individuals will be perceived as desirable commodities (the six-foot-two investment banker; the communications director with a good decade of childbearing years still ahead of her) or relegated to the remainder bin, shopworn by blind dates and disappointments.

Rachel Greenwald's new book, "Find a Husband After 35 Using What I Learned at Harvard Business School" (Ballantine; $22.95), takes the notion of the marketplace literally, and addresses those single women who worry that their comparative value is dwindling with each passing year. "You, the reader, are the 'product,' " Greenwald, H.B.S. Class of 1993, writes. "And *The Program*"—her fifteen-step course to matrimonial satisfaction, which she also provides in workshops that she conducts around the country—"is a 'strategic plan' to help you 'market' yourself to find your future husband." There are twenty-eight million single women in America, Greenwald writes, and a dedicated husband-hunter should be no less zealous than General Mills in distinguishing her product from the competition. Greenwald urges women to embrace the business practices they know from the workplace and apply them to private life. "When you've finished this book, you will be able to devise and advertise your personal brand, know how to get out of your rut, be able to create a winning plan to increase the volume of men you meet, conduct an exit interview and much more," Greenwald promises.

In order to establish that "perso
brand," a woman must submit to rig
ous market testing. She should conve
focus groups among friends, form
boyfriends, and workmates to lea
whether she should grow her hair lon
or wear red instead of beige. She shou
reflect on her Physical, Personal, a
Other characteristics, and identify th



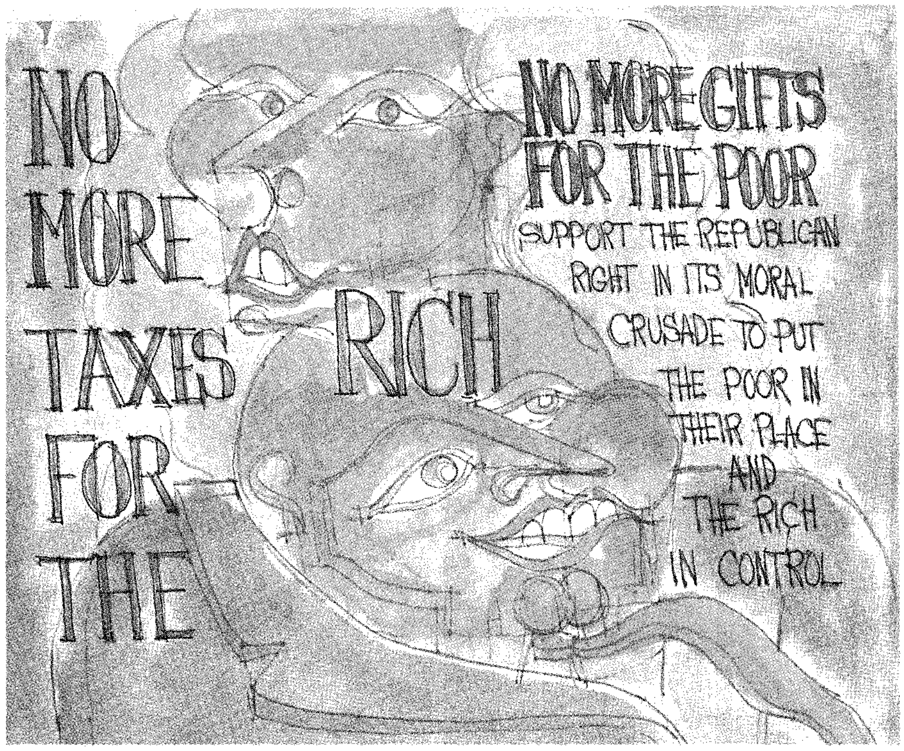
Rachel Greenwald

of them ("Witty, Easy to Talk '
Golfer" or "Architect, Charming,
ternational") which will distinguish
from the pack. She should reinforce
brand message through the pro
techniques of consumer marketing,
cluding online marketing via Inter
dating sites (Greenwald warns aga
using a slutty-sounding screen na
or betraying a taste for Virginia W
or Danielle Steel, to which no ma
expected to warm) and direct m
Greenwald suggests that a single wor
send, to a hundred or more frier
greeting cards bearing photograph
herself being witty or playing golf,
include the message "This year, I wc
like to find someone wonderful to sp

ı life with. Do you know any sin- : men you could introduce me to?" e should work on what Greenwald ls her word-of-mouth advertising by, : example, casually saying to a colgue, "I was talking to my friend Me- ıa last night, and she said, 'I want to roduce you to this guy I met in my iting class. I've told him that you're a ırming architect with an internanal background.' "

Some of Greenwald's suggestions finding men are achingly familiar; : advises single women to take eveıg classes in such male-friendly subts as log-furniture-making. (This nedy has been proposed by so many rice columnists over the years that to end an evening class in order to learn out the advertised subject would ely be as misguided as stepping into nassage parlor and expecting to get nassage.) Other ideas are more orig- l: one of Greenwald's clients vol- :eered to teach a seminar entitled fteen-Minute Meals for Bachelors" n though she had no particular ex- tise in the subject. In Greenwald's w, every moment a woman is any- ere other than her apartment—a ce where she should spend as little e as possible, except while updating online profile—is an opportunity to et men. Accordingly, she urges the der, while at the theatre, to visit the ies' room during the performance, so t she might spend the intermission in line but, rather, loitering brightly he lobby, in the hope of bumping › Mr. Right. (With luck, he won't ›gnize her as the woman who rud the climax of Act II for the rest of audience.) On Wednesday nights, :enwald advises, a woman should nt pizza parlors, where she might l a divorced dad with his kids on their lweek visitation. Jury duty should be comed as a venue for a chance en- nter with a suitable man, though :enwald does not recommend that readers go so far as to seek him in defendant's chair.

Greenwald's premise is that women r thirty-five have a harder time meetmen than they did when they were nger, while men find themselves, heir temples gray and their financial ›stments mature, confronted with bundance of nubile prospects. "Many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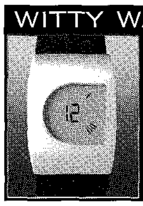

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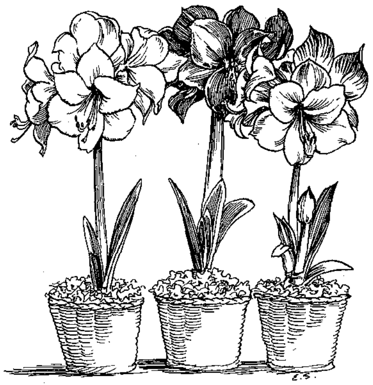

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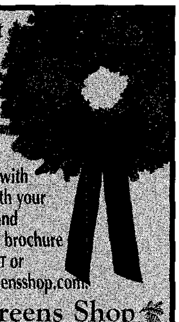

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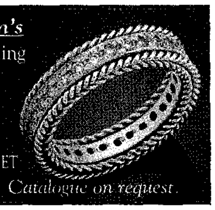

men experience a sudden popularity after age thirty-five because they are in short supply, and they start to expect it," she warns. The years take a grim toll on women which must be faced unflinchingly: Greenwald suggests regular visits to the hair colorist ("There is plenty of time to look 'distinguished' after you are married") and other strategic defenses against the laws of nature. "*Always* wear a push-up bra," she writes. "After thirty-five it can't hurt and can only help." Escaping singledom will, Greenwald cautions, be costly in terms of both financial expenditure—she advises establishing a marketing budget of ten or twenty per cent of one's annual income and setting it aside in a bank account labelled "Husband Search"—and time. One client took a year off from work to focus on finding a husband; another was nearly fired because of all the time she was devoting to the project. Humiliation will also be required, particularly when it comes to Step 10, Telemarketing. "You are going to call everyone you know and directly ask them to fix you up with someone," she writes. No alumnus, Realtor, veterinarian, florist, travel agent, group-therapy colleague, or old boyfriend must go uninterrogated. By the time a single woman reaches Step 13, "Product Lifecycle: Recharge Yourself," she may, as Greenwald says, "just need a good cry."

This is about as close as Greenwald gets to the kind of empathetic tone that used to characterize self-help books for women disappointed in love. In the nineteen-seventies and eighties, such books were typically written by therapists. Robin Norwood, the author of the 1985 best-seller "Women Who Love Too Much," begins her first chapter with a scene in which a client examines the framed counselling credentials hanging on Norwood's wall before describing her inability to keep a man and saying, "I'll do whatever it takes. I'm a really hard worker"—which, back in 1985, was a terrible thing to be if you were looking to couple. The examination of the inner self recommended by books like "Women Who Love Too Much" and "Smart Women, Foolish Choices" became increasingly obsolete during the nineties: the influential 1995 best-seller "The Rules: Time-Tested Secrets for Capturing the Heart of Mr. Right" v
based on a strategic restoration of p
feminist courting principles and adv
cated ruthless efficiency through exa
gerated feminine deference.

Greenwald's inspiration, of cour
can be found not in the self-help se
tion of the bookstore but in the busin
section, those shelves where you fi
"Who Moved My Cheese?" (Gree
wald has a discussion headed "W
Moved My Altar?") and the œuvre
Tom Peters, who in 1997 wrote a ma
ifesto for *Fast Company* entitled "T
Brand Called You," an early applicati
of product marketing to people. One
the familiar publishing tropes of
self-help genre has been to advert
the author's therapeutically approp
ate academic credentials—M.D., Ph.
M.S.W.—on the book's cover; Gree
wald's name is accompanied by the l
ters M.B.A., and she is businesslike
dismissing any exploration of the r
sons, personal or cultural, that might
count for an older woman's single stat
"Whatever your baggage is, you ca
carry it around with you on *The P
gram*," she writes. Indeed, a Progr
woman will already have her har
full, since she will, in accordance with
chapter on guerrilla marketing, be c
rying around a "conversation starter"
a "physical item that is designed
prompt curiosity and provoke inter
tion." She tells the story of one thi
six-year-old client who met a man i
coffee shop while she was adding Ec
to her half-caf vanilla latte; he noti
her copy of "Don't Sweat the Sm
Stuff" and asked whether it was "
good." Greenwald informs her reac
that the couple, who have now b
married for two years, served half-
vanilla lattes at their wedding recept

Still, as the sociologist Arlie Rus
Hochschild points out in her recent c
lection of essays, "The Commerci
zation of Intimate Life," advice bo
don't reveal much about what wor
actually do; they just show what wo
en's current cultural options are p
ceived to be. The eclipse of the the
peutic model of human relations
its replacement with a model dra
from business-management theory
signature cultural shift of the mom
like the emergence of the half-caf
nilla latte. The woman Greenwal

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writing to lives in a brand-saturated world, and it is while shopping among those brands that she finds the coördinates of her identity—an identity that, in Greenwald's scheme, is merely another brand, jostling for attention on a crowded shelf.

What Greenwald's metaphor rules out is the possibility that women might like the chance to be discerning consumers themselves. While she devotes about three hundred pages to telling a woman how to revamp her packaging, she has little to say about what sort of husband might be acquired by these means, beyond the age-old dictum "Don't be so picky." Greenwald tells her readers that within twelve to eighteen months they can be married to "someone wonderful," a phrase that she suggests the reader adopt when friends ask her what kind of man she is trying to find, but the implication is that readers shouldn't be holding out for a graduate of Harvard Business School. "Your future husband may be divorced, he may have kids of his own, he may be shorter than you," Greenwald warns. "A key marketing goal is to sell your product to as many customer segments as possible." That's the thing about being a product, of course; a box of Special K is hardly entitled to an opinion about whose shopping cart it ends up in. One of Greenwald's success stories is that of forty-seven-year-old Julie, a vice-president at a Wall Street firm, who, having failed to marry one of the smart, successful Jewish investment bankers she thought she was destined for, met her husband at Radio Shack, where he was the store manager. Another would-be wife, Kate, forty, quits her job in Manhattan and moves to what she thinks might be the less spousally competitive city of Minneapolis, where she has neither a job nor a home. "As this book goes to press, Kate has been in her new city for one month," we're informed. "She says her net is cast so wide that her only requirement is 'a man who knows how to use cutlery.'" In Greenwald's world, the customer is always Mr. Right.♦

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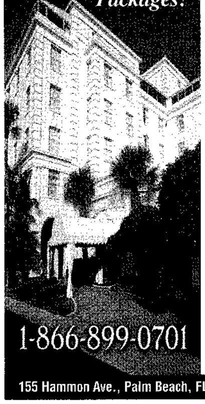

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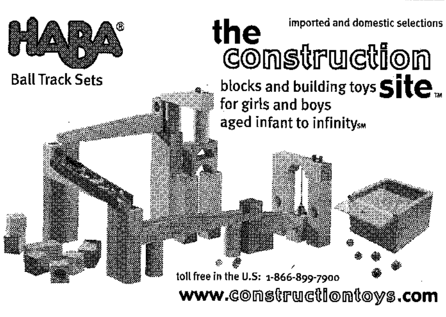
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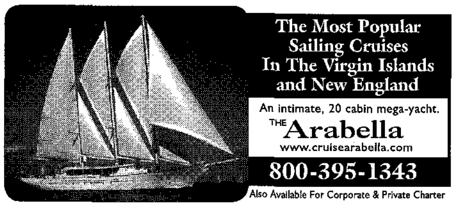
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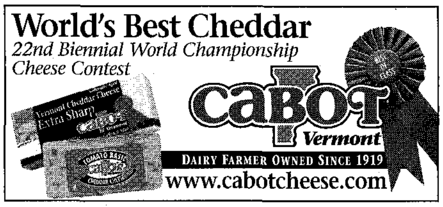
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BRIEFLY NOTED

The Great Fire, *by Shirley Hazzard (Farrar, Straus & Giroux; $24).* Hazzard is nothing if not discriminating. Hierarchies of feeling, perception, and taste abound in her writing, and this novel—her first in more than twenty years—takes on the very notion of what it means to be civilized. The fire of the title refers primarily to the atomic bombing of Japan, but also to the possibility of transcendent passion in its aftermath. In 1947, a thirty-two-year-old English war hero visiting Hiroshima during the occupation finds himself billeted in a compound overseen by a boorish Australian brigadier and his scheming wife. He is immediately enchanted, however, by the couple's children—a brilliant, sickly young man and his adoring sister—who prove to be prisoners in a different sort of conflict. In the ensuing love story, Hazzard's moral refinement occasionally veers toward preciosity, but such lapses are counterbalanced by her bracing conviction that we either build or destroy the world we want to live in with our every word and gesture.

Politics, *by Adam Thirlwell (Fourth Estate; $22.95).* In this début novel, sedulous dissection of a love affair involving a pair of young Londoners—who, with the addition of a female friend, become a threesome—serves as an occasion for playing with the old saw about the personal being political. Thirlwell, attempting to chart some sort of moral-aesthetic triangle bounded by Kurt Vonnegut, Martin Amis, and Milan Kundera, declares, "A threesome is the ultimate sexual unit. It is the socialist utopia of sex." The author makes enjoyable sport of the contemporary taste for porno-chic transgression, but, in repeatedly halting the narrative to liken his characters' callow problems, hesitancies, and dilemmas to episodes in the lives of Stalin, Mao, and Vaclav Havel, he sacrifices narrative engagement to the display of his own virtuosity.

And the Dead Shall Rise, *by Steve Oney (Pantheon; $35).* The 1915 lynching of Leo Frank remains one of the most harrowing episodes in the hist of the American South. A respected ure in Atlanta's Jewish community the superintendent of the National P cil Company, Frank was hastily convic of murdering thirteen-year-old M Phagan, one of his workers. Dou about Frank's guilt—the evidence largely circumstantial—prompted a w of national activism on his behalf: b the *Times* and William Randolph He took up the cause. Frank's death s tence was commuted, but the perc tion of Yankee-Jewish meddling sto the wrath of Southern populists, they vowed revenge. For Oney, the has been a consuming obsession; sc seventeen years of work went into vast narrative. If he sometimes overp the already considerable drama of story, his careful demonstration that lynching was no sudden spasm of n violence but a well-planned operat by prominent Georgians—among tl a leading judge and a former go nor—is startling.

Manhattan Within, *by Matteo Per (Random House; $35).* As in his prev book, "Manhattan Unfurled," Peri starts with a long strip of paper, fol accordion style, and renders an ideali view of a New York skyline with colo pencils and a subtle palette of oil tels. The previous panorama showed skyline as it appears from the wa this time his imaginary vantage p is inside Central Park. Rising abo thick green smudge representing trees, the buildings on the four side the park are drawn with architect rigor and Steinbergian whimsy. "F the park all the buildings seem to l at me," Pericoli writes. "When I working on the skyline along the e of the island, they were giving t backs to me as if they didn't care."

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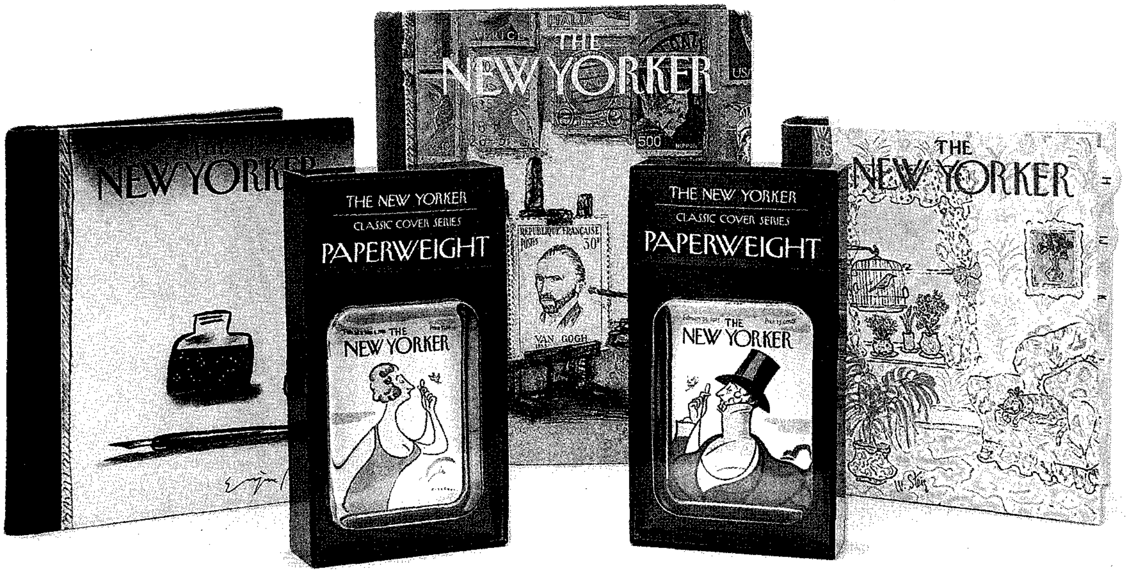
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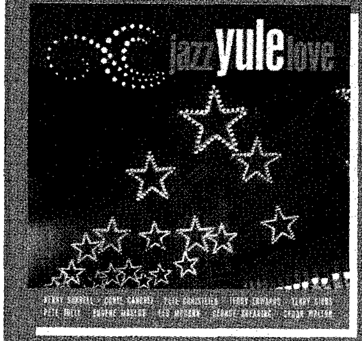

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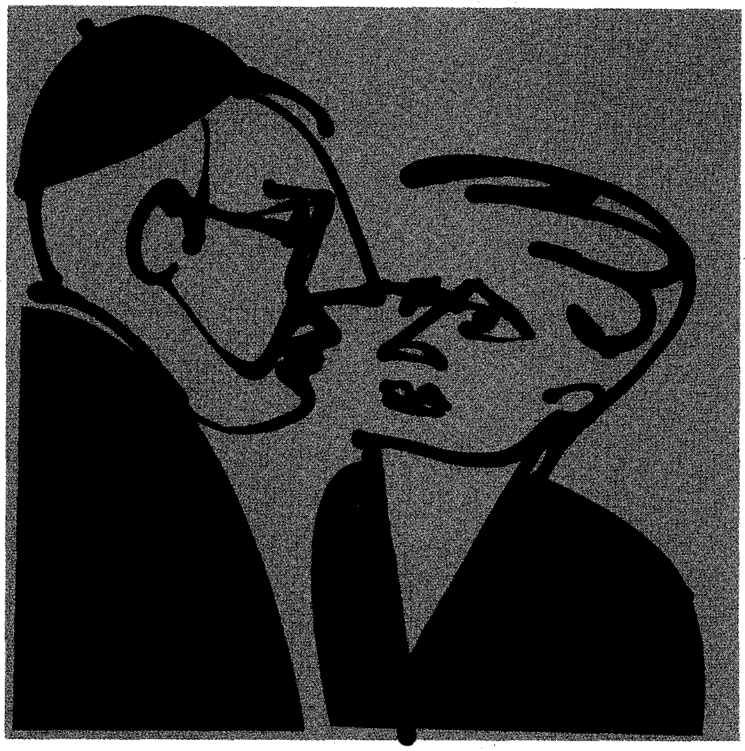
MUSICAL EVENTS

THE RAY OF DEATH

A haunting "La Juive" at the Met.

BY ALEX ROSS



"La Juive" reveals more human ugliness than audiences may want to see.

A hundred years ago, in the fall of 1903, Gustav Mahler was rehearsing Fromental Halévy's opera "La Juive" in Vienna. By Mahler's time, the art of French grand opera that Halévy exemplified had gone out of fashion, its stylized set pieces and grandiose production values superseded by Wagnerian stream of consciousness and naturalistic plots. Nonetheless, Mahler believed in "La Juive," and he lavished special attention on the finale of Act III, in which Brogni, a cardinal in fifteenth-century Switzerland, condemns the heretical love of Léopold, a Catholic prince, and Rachel, the "Jewess" of the title. "Anathema! Anathema!" the Cardinal sings. The word signified not merely excommunication from the Church but everlasting destruction at the hand of God. At the rehearsal, Mahler watched in irritation as his chorus stood around passively. He demanded, "Do you have any idea what it meant to be condemned in the period in which this o
is set?" He jumped onstage to mime
expression that he wished his singe
assume. It was, an observer recalled,
face of a man in extreme terror, retrea
from "the ray of death."

"La Juive" is now playing at the M
ropolitan Opera for the first time in
cades, in a production borrowed, fitti
enough, from the Vienna State O
The ending of Act III achieved ex
the effect that Mahler desired. The m
is potent in itself: for the announcen
of the anathema, Halévy pairs a deep
voice with a relentless triplet figure i
trombones, and then gathers the ful
chestra and chorus into a hurtling n
But audiences also register the haun
historical resonances that have colle
around this opera since its premièr
1835. It is a work by a Jewish comp
in which anti-Semitism is a motiva
force. Wagner, the foremost anti-Se

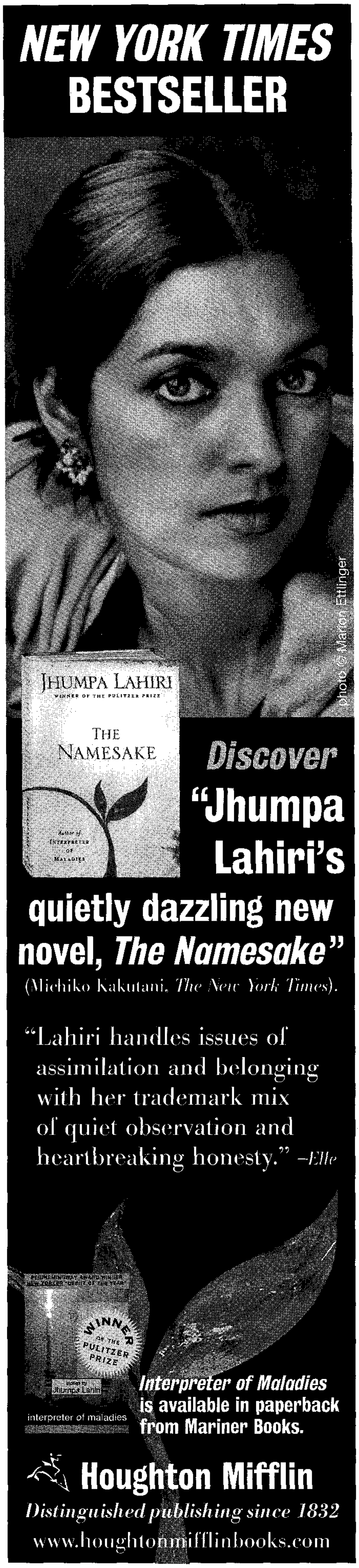
the age, inexplicably loved it; Mahler led it one of the greatest operas ever itten. It is, for all its melodramatic trap- ıgs, a profoundly unsentimental story which hate engenders hate: Rachel's her, the long-suffering Éléazar, be- mes as fanatical as the Christians who nounce him. "La Juive" starts out like reaky period piece but ends up reveal- ; more fundamental human ugliness n audiences may want to see.

The man who unleashed this sophisticated horror was an easygoing pro- sional who did nothing else nearly as narkable in his career. Wagner de- ibed him as "open and honest, and not remeditatedly cunning trickster like eyerbeer." (Wagner should have writ- , "like me.") Halévy was no revolu- nary, but he did make intelligent use of enlarged orchestra and a dramatically egrounded chorus. His greatest asset s Eugène Scribe's blood-and-thunder etto, which has one of the most im- ssively lurid kickers in the canon. At very end of the opera, Rachel is thrown o a boiling cauldron, with Éléazar n to follow. Before he dies, however, reveals that Rachel is not his child, is she a Jew; she is, in fact, the long- daughter of Cardinal Brogni. Éléa- could have saved her with a single d, but his hatred of the society around n has grown too great. Verdi's "Il vatore" arrives at a very similar you're- ning-the-wrong-person epiphany. What sort of statement the liberal- holic Scribe and the assimilated Ha- wished to make on Jewish matters is really clear. Diana Hallman, in a book ut "La Juive," concludes that the in- ion was not so much to celebrate the s as to set forth a "critique of the in- rance and despotism of political and gious institutions." Éléazar, the central racter of the piece, is an ambiguous ition: he is shown as a devout man, iding over a touching Passover Seder e beginning of Act II, yet he also fits stereotype of the Jewish miser. Many eteenth-century anti-Semites were enemies of the conservative order, ch perhaps explains why the liberal gner found this opera so compelling. e of the great inspirations of "La Juive" e ironic use of a church organ and the Deum as counterpoint to the action. di and Wagner both copied the effect. Wagner, in addition, probably took his "Magic Fire" music from a weirdly glittering passage that plays after Rachel exposes Léopold as the lover of a Jew.

Mahler's fascination with "La Juive," which began early in his career, must have been based on a deeper identification. All around him were the narrowed eyes and mistrustful stares of those who saw a kind of heresy in his "marriage" to the Vienna Court Opera. He talked of transcending his Jewishness, yet, like Éléazar, he became defiant in the face of prejudice. So it is no surprise that reminiscences of "La Juive" can be found in his works. He was almost certainly recalling the instrumental introduction to Éléazar's Act IV aria when he wrote a parodistic Jewish melody for a pair of oboes in his First Symphony. I also wonder whether the savage five-note up-and-down figure that recurs in several of the symphonies—notably, in the funereal brass melody at the beginning of the Third and in the stormy second movement of the Fifth—might be traced back to the music of Cardinal Brogni's "anathema," which the composer rehearsed so thoroughly in 1903. Finally, and most strangely, the choral exclamation "*Bereite dich!*"—"Prepare yourself! Prepare to live!"—in the Second Symphony is copied note for note from the chorus "Au pécheur, Dieu," in Act V, in which the Christians pray for the Jews to be pardoned for their sins.

Tenors could be forgiven for thinking that some sort of curse hangs over the role of Éléazar. It was the last thing Caruso ever sang in public; early on Christmas Day in 1920, a few hours after appearing in "La Juive" at the Met, the tenor doubled over in screaming agony, the victim of an attack of pleurisy. He died seven months later. A few decades on, Richard Tucker was urging the Met to mount the opera for him; as a former cantor in New York synagogues, he had a special feeling for the part. One week after the Met finally relented, Tucker died of a heart attack.

Neil Shicoff, a cantor's son born in Brooklyn, has broken the spell. In recent years, this veteran tenor has found new solidity in his singing and acting, and with "La Juive" he is having the triumph of his career. His Éléazar is a fully imagined and beautifully shaded portrait of a good man driven into a state of irremediable rage. At first, his voice sounded pinched, and he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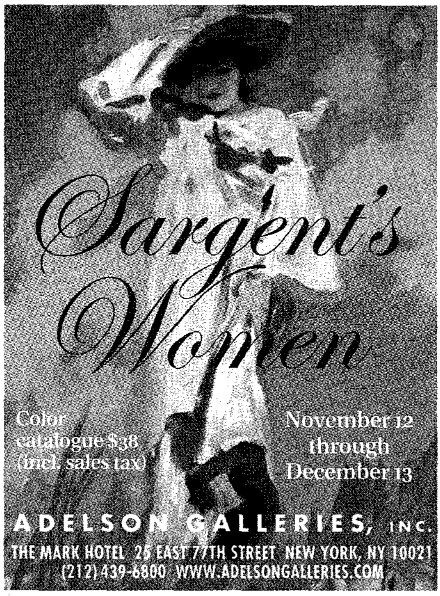
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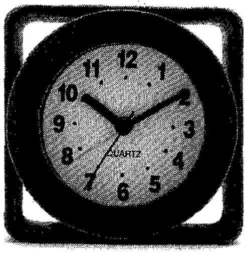
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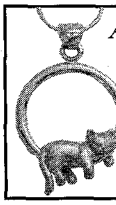
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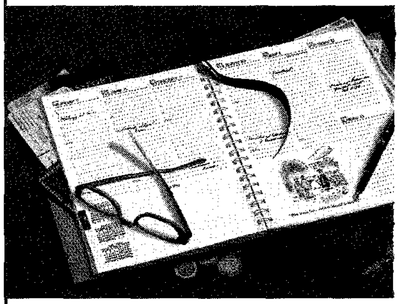
was in danger of being upstaged by the excellent young tenor Eric Cutler, who sang the role of Prince Léopold. In fact, Shicoff was husbanding his resources, and he gathered strength as the evening went on. In a very moving way, he applied touches of cantorial style—knowing, perhaps, that Scribe originally envisioned the character as a rabbi. His Act IV tour de force, "Rachel, quand du seigneur," was a purely musical howl of emotion. Unfortunately, this production omitted the final cabaletta, although it would have further illuminated Éléazar's motivation: his desire for vengeance is redoubled when he hears a mob calling for the death of Jews.

Shicoff's performance would have sufficed for a brilliant evening, but Soile Isokoski, who sang the part of Rachel, drew an equally wild ovation. The young Finnish soprano is immensely secure across her entire range, with ringing high notes and a rich, expressive lower register. What's more, she is an openhearted, transparently emotional singer—a major artist in the making. Also in the cast were the usually captivating soprano Elizabeth Futral, having a somewhat unsteady night as the Princess Eudoxie, and Ferruccio Furlanetto, who found not only the implacable will but also the deep-seated sorrow of Cardinal Brogni. The conductor, Marcello Viotti, is no Mahler, but he elicited a forceful, kinetic sound from the orchestra.

Günter Krämer, the director, drew crisply defined performances from all the singers. Unfortunately, he got only heavy-handed symbolism from his set and costume designers, Gottfried Pilz and Isabel Ines Glathar. The Christian "establishment" was dressed all in white, with ridiculous Tyrolean costumes predominating; the Jews lived in an inky-black underworld. A visit to the Jewish Museum in Berlin might have revealed the chilling pictorial possibilities of a more realistic approach. One of the most frightening artifacts of anti-Semitism that I have ever seen is a medieval image in that museum, showing the expulsion of the Jews from Nuremberg. An endless line of them stretches out from the gates, far more than a medieval city could possibly have held. The artist was expelling an infinite number of Jews from his mind. Perhaps Mahler was recalling such ancient scenes when he acted out ultimate terror on the stage of the Vienna opera, or perhaps he had an inkling of what was to come. ♦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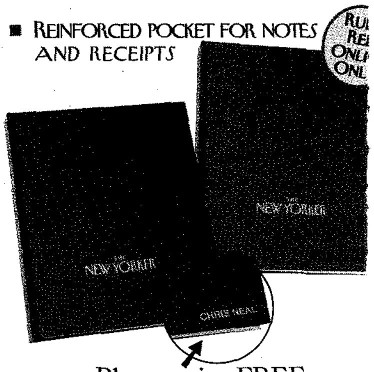

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THE CURRENT CINEMA

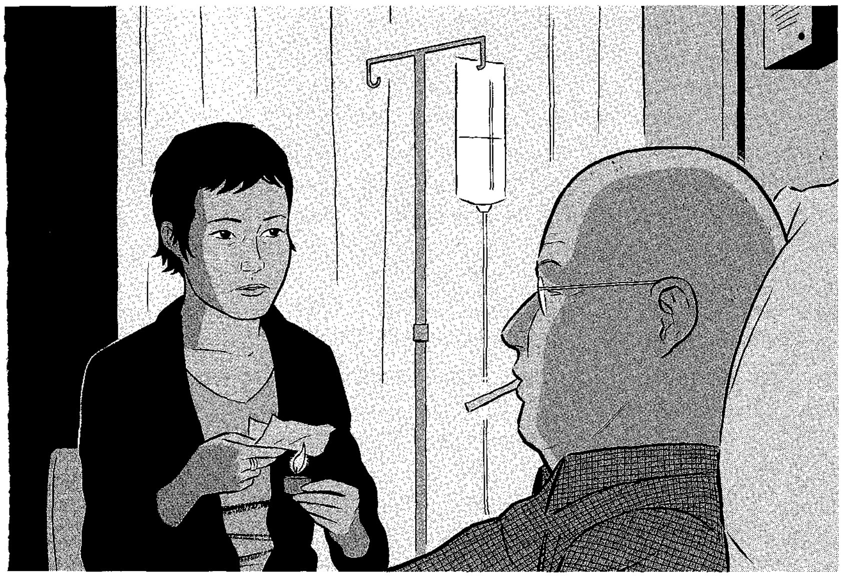
CLOSE TO THE END

“The Barbarian Invasions” and “21 Grams.”

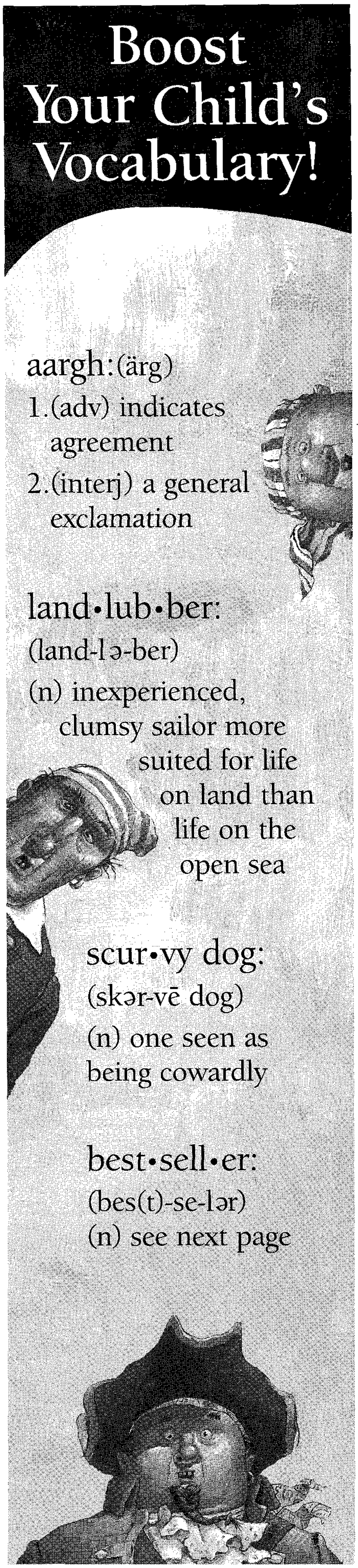
BY DAVID DENBY

“The Decline of the American Em-ire” (1986), the French-Canadian er-director Denys Arcand created a panionable erotic fiction. A group niversity intellectuals gathered at a side house outside Montreal for a kend of food, gossip, and sex. These lemic folk—the women as well as the —were ebullient talkers and boasters loved to fool around. Rémy (Rémy rd), a boisterous philanderer, was at center of the group, surrounded by wife, two of his former mistresses, male friends both straight and gay. rcand’s new film, “The Barbarian sions,” Rémy, now in his fifties, is g of cancer in a Quebec hospital. wife, fed up with his unending infi-ies, threw him out years ago, but she guards his morale, and she summons son, Sébastien (Stéphane Rous-), from London to be with his father. two men, it turns out, don’t get along. boy, Sébastien never had much at-on from Rémy, and Rémy is furious Sébastien—a sleek, wealthy invest-t banker—turned his back on the lectual passions that animated him and his friends. “If only he would read one book—just one!” Rémy thunders from his bed, and when the two meet they can hardly talk to each other—they break into spitting rages in front of an aghast nun who goes around the hospital handing out holy wafers.

Rather mysteriously, Sébastien—out of loyalty to his mother, perhaps, or suppressed love for his noisy reprobate of a dad—begins to arrange for Rémy’s comfort. In the crowded, state-run hospital, he gets his father a quiet room, bribes some union thugs to spruce it up, and then summons from the four corners of the globe the gang of friends who appeared in “Decline.” The hospital room becomes the site of an ongoing party: sexual memories, bawdy jokes, regrets, and political tirades bang off the walls at all hours. Eventually, the group moves to a house near the one that was the setting for “Decline,” and, as Rémy grapples with the failures and satisfactions of his life, the movie quiets down and ends with great gentleness. “The Barbarian Invasions” might be called an idyll of death. Without excessive sentiment (but with-



ie-Josée Croze and Rémy Girard in Denys Arcand’s new movie.



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aargh: (ärg)
1. (adv) indicates agreement
2. (interj) a general exclamation

land•lub•ber:
(land-lə-ber)
(n) inexperienced, clumsy sailor more suited for life on land than life on the open sea

scur•vy dog:
(skər-vē dog)
(n) one seen as being cowardly

best•sell•er:
(bes(t)-se-lər)
(n) see next page

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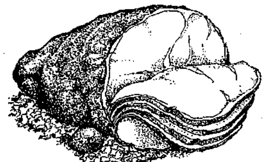

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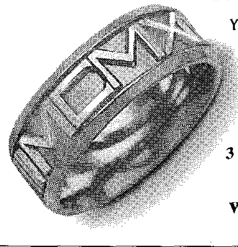

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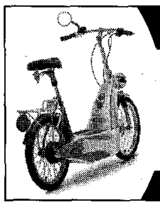

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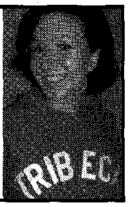

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out slighting sentiment, either), Arcand does his best to sum up. What was Rémy's life about? And what can he pass on to the next generation?

Most movies are inarticulate. Arcand's movies are hyperarticulate. At times, he's given to a rather facile owlishness, and I'm not quite sure how to take the numerous references to literature and history—are they meant to be signs of erudition or a case of reflexive name-dropping? But it's obvious that Arcand loves these characters, even though he lets us know that none of them are single-minded and disciplined enough to achieve anything lasting. Their real gift, we gather, is for friendship and for the sort of sexual badinage that is close to infantile but also joyous and ripe. "The Barbarian Invasions" comes out of an intellectual culture more candid, demonstrative, and uninhibited than our own.

Rémy is an old-fashioned Marxist freethinker, an anti-clerical radical humanist who is capable, at death's door, of berating the sweet-natured nun for Pope Pius XII's misdeeds during the Second World War. This blathering hedonist has never worked very hard, but he's not too sorry about it, since he's always had such a good time. Rotund and bespectacled, he's the kind of ordinary-looking man who gets women into bed because he loves and needs them so much, and women respond to his flirtatious adoration—he's a rogue, but easy to forgive. Sébastien, however, who has defined himself in opposition to Rémy, can't let go of his anger. Stéphane Rousseau is well known in Canada as a standup comic and singer, and he gives a fascinatingly minimal performance as the brilliant young financier. We can't quite tell what makes Sébastien tick, but we suspect that his resistance to his father's slovenly appetites has him all balled up, and that he dispels his unhappiness with extraordinary bouts of industry.

Arcand is trying to work out his ambivalent feelings about a world under threat. Is such a world worth passing on or not? Is the empire really "in decline"? The terrorists may have struck the World Trade Center (we see the events on TV), and the next generation doesn't read (the one genius in this movie about intellectuals never cracks a book). Yet the invading barbarians (both the terrorists and the non-readers) are still a long way from destroying United States—indeed, the Canad have to cross the border and go to heart of the empire just to get first- medical treatment. In an oblique the movie is a rueful salute to the infi energies of American capitalism. Ré the old radical can't change the wo he never could. But he can change a of the young barbarians. One of Sé tien's most humane acts is to befrie former schoolmate, Nathalie (Ma Josée Croze), who has become a bea ful, sad-eyed junkie, and she procu supply of heroin to ease the sufferin Rémy's final hours. Rémy's reconc tion with Sébastien, even though we see it coming, is extremely moving. connection with Nathalie is more s tual than emotional; his modest re over his pleasantly wasted past lin with her despair over the future. Aft the noise and the jokes, Arcand w with exquisite tenderness when he br these two together, and, at the Nathalie is left alone, like Alice in W derland, in Rémy's book-lined stu room filled with the intellectual trea of the Western world.

Written by Guillermo Arriaga directed by Alejandro Gon Iñárritu—the team responsible fo powerful "Amores Perros"—"21 Gr is the kind of bad movie that ma reviewer feel terrible. It has been pu gether with great sincerity, and yet, passioned and affecting as some of "21 Grams" is also an arrogant fai The central event is an unfathom tragedy: an ex-con who is desper trying to stay straight accidentally over and kills a man and his two girls. The con, Jack Jordan (Benicio Toro), injects Jesus into every event emotion in his life, and the acci leaves him feeling that God has a doned him. At the same time, a ma matics professor, Paul Rivers (Penn), who has a bad ticker, gains a lease on life by receiving the dead r heart; he then tracks down the r wife, Cristina (Naomi Watts). At she's repelled by his interest, which s grotesque to her, but eventually she in love with him, and then pers him to seek revenge against the guy killed her family. Now, everything told you in the previous four senten

e to the logic and construction of
movie. In "21 Grams," the events do
run in a straight line; they have been
hered up by an editor and flung down
no discernible order. We see Sean
nn lying in a hospital bed and then, a
scenes later, moving around out-
rs, and then back in bed; we see Del
o tearing himself apart, building him-
up, and then tearing himself apart
in. And so it goes with all the char-
rs. The film moves forward, back-
d, sidewise, inside out, and upside
vn. The intent, I guess, is to show
v three sensitive and damaged people
ht impinge on one another's lives,
even on one another's unconscious,
rocess that, in the characters' over-
ping circles of action, never ends—a
cess, in other words, not bound by
e or causality. This complex goal may
nobly ambitious, but it's impossible
ull off dramatically. Through most
he movie, we don't know where we
in the story or why a given action
uld matter. The jagged pieces of the
saic keep dropping off the wall and
ng to the floor with a clatter.

Quentin Tarantino sent the tenses
nning in "Pulp Fiction," and so did
istopher Nolan in "Memento." Both
se movies were noirishly stylized and
ny, and one could enjoy them as
orate pranks. But the material in
Grams" is grim and overwrought,
the visual style produced by the cinematographer, Rodrigo Prieto, is as dank and ugly as pieces of scrap metal lying in a scummy pond. There's no joke here, to put it mildly. Is it possible that Arriaga and Iñárritu, realizing that their story was loopy, scrambled the sequences in order to avoid an impression of ludicrous melodrama? Whatever their motives, they got three great actors to give their utmost to the project. While you are watching the movie, it may not make much sense, but, scene after scene, it's breathtakingly acted and as painfully soulful as a meeting of recovering alcoholics. Sean Penn, after his bravura flights in "Mystic River," is, this time, quiet and grave, a fatalist beyond surprise or shock. Benicio Del Toro, with dark clown circles under his eyes, his hair a greasy mess, his body tattooed all over with Jesus love, is so dolorously made up that one cries over him to avoid laughing at him. The revelation of the movie, however, is the British-born Naomi Watts (from "Mulholland Drive"), who goes from glum silence to violently spasmodic outbursts without hitting a false note. Filmmakers must have genuine strengths or the flagrant talents of swindlers to inspire this kind of devotion. What's saddest about "21 Grams" is that Arriaga and Iñárritu got so wrapped up in the tragic and profound emotions they wanted to express that they never asked themselves if the movie worked for the audience at even the simplest level. ♦

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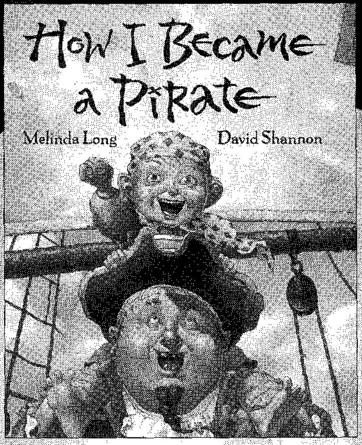

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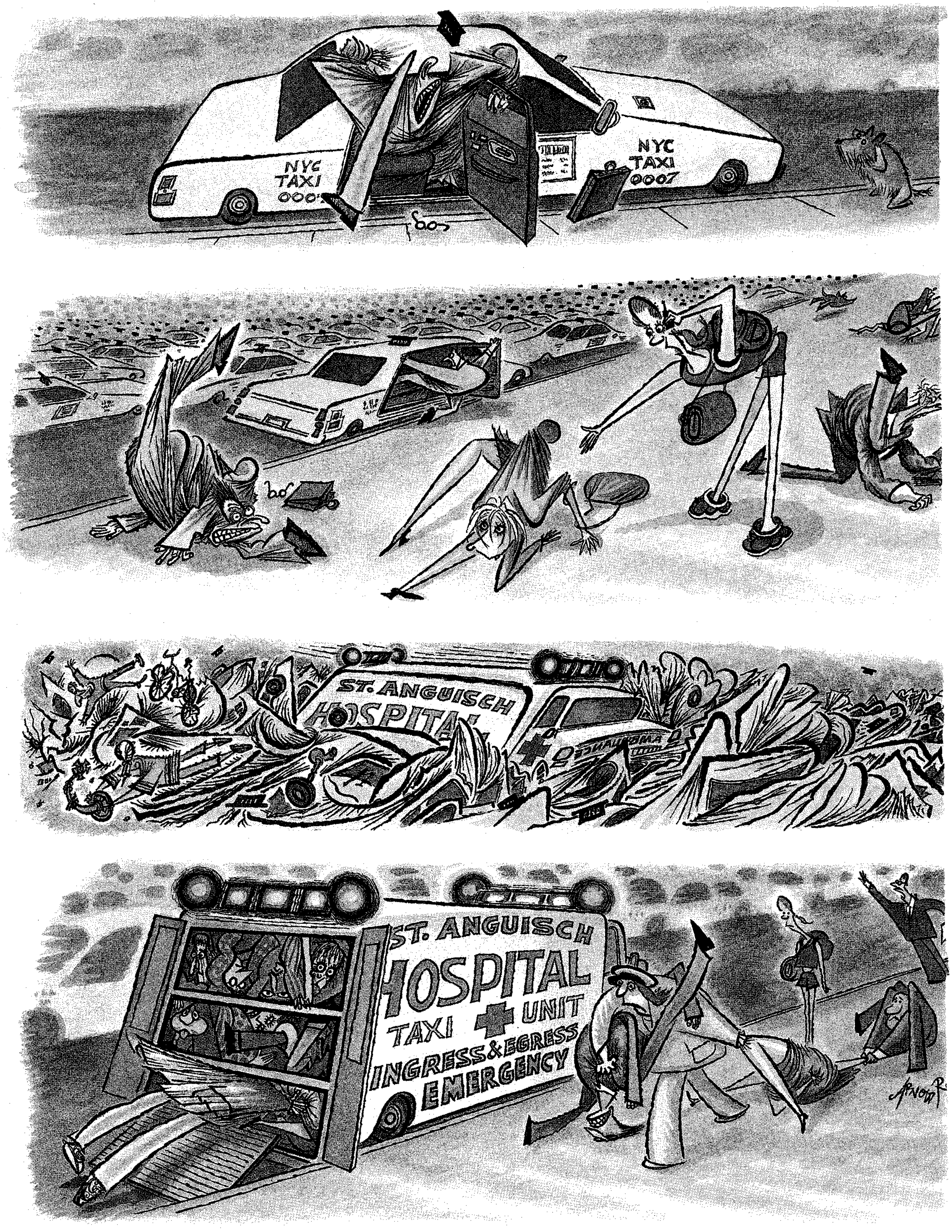
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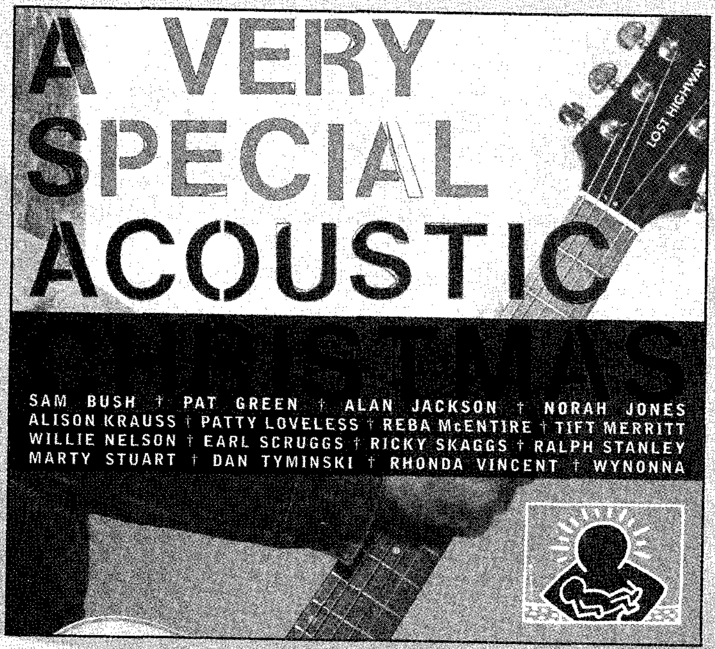
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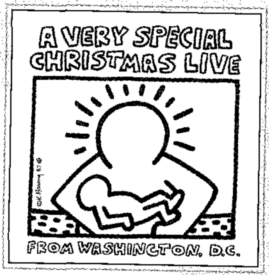
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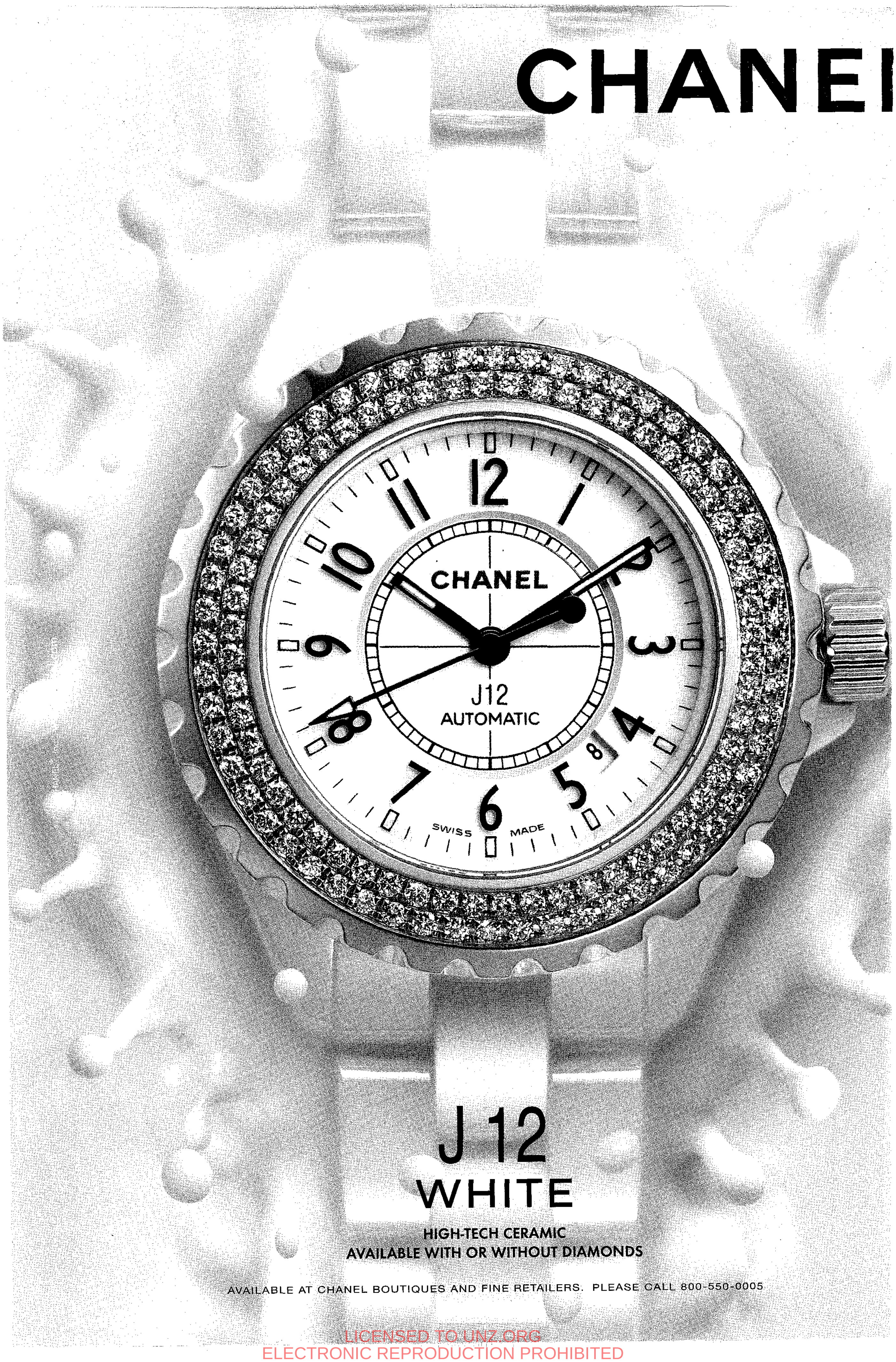
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